ADELAIDE;

OR, THE

CHATEAU DE ST. PIERRE.

RAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL TANJORE

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

A TALE OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

By MRS. EDGEWORTH.

VOL. II.

In winter's tedious nights, sit by the fire
With good old folks, and let them tell the tales
Of woeful ages, long ago betide.

SHAKSPEARE.

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THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL
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ADELAIDE.

CHAP. I.

"And weep the more, because I weep in vain!"
GRAY.

DURING that night and the following day, Adelaide quitted not the chamber of her aunt; but on the night of the second day, when nearly overcome with fatigue, she had suffered herself to be prevailed on by the physician, who foresaw the approaching dissolution of his patient, to retire to her own apart-

ment and partake of some repose; Madame de Bertonville expired without a groan in the arms of her attendants, as they were endeavouring to raise her in her bed. The grief which Adelaide felt on being informed of this event, and which, though prepared for it, she had not expected would thus soon have taken place, was such as might naturally be expected from the sensibility of her heart, and the sentiments of gratitude and affection with which the kind behaviour of Madame had inspired her; and while those principles of religion and resignation to the will of Heaven, which had been early implanted in her mind, restrained her from giving way to violent and ineffectual lamentation, she

she mourned her loss with the most unfeigned and sincere sorrow.

She remained till after the interment in her own apartment, where she was attended by Catherine, whose unremitting attention to Madame de Bertonville during her illness had secured her the good opinion and regard of Adelaide, which latter sentiment was greatly increased by the strong attachment the girl had manifested for her ever since her residence in the family. As the Baron had not made any inquiries after her, nor expressed any desire to see her since the death of her aunt, Adelaide felt but little inclination for an interview with him; she, however, the day after the interment had taken place,

 received

received a message from Monsieur de Bertonville, desiring her immediate attendance for the purpose of hearing the will of Madame de Bertonville read aloud. If she had before felt averse to quit the solitude of her apartment, the melancholy occasion of the summons she now received greatly added to her reluctance; but as she judged that it might appear a disrespect to the memory of her aunt, if she declined attending, she determined to endeavour to conquer her feelings, and with faultering steps and a countenance pale and languid from the fatigue she had undergone, and strongly expressive of the state of her mind, she descended the staircase. On reaching the door of the saloon, she was unable to open it from the agitation

into

into which she had been thrown by the abruptness of the message, and with the lock trembling in her hand she stood for some moments irresolute whether to proceed or to return; till at length the sound of the Baron's voice within the apartment recalled her to herself, and the apprehension she felt lest he should suddenly open the door before she had time to effect her retreat, fixed her wavering resolution.

On entering the saloon, where she expected to meet only the Baron and his domestics, she was surprised to see two other gentlemen in mourning, both of whom she had an imperfect recollection of having seen before; but her thoughts were too much engrossed

by the late sad event, to admit of her remembering either the time or place.

Although he had not seen her since the death of Madame de Bertonville, yet the Baron did not appear to notice the entrance of Mademoiselle de Valmont, but continued to pace the room with folded arms and measured steps; while Adelaide, glad to escape his observation, seated herself without interrupting the silence, in a chair to which one of the gentlemen handed her.

The heart-felt sorrow which appeared in the faces of the servants, all of whom were much attached to Madame de Bertonville from the easy pliability of her disposition, which they had learnt to value,

perhaps

perhaps more than they might otherwise have done, from the contrast of the Baron's deportment and the mourning habits of the surrounding group, served only to increase the deep dejection of her spirits, and covering her face with her handkerchief she gave vent to the tears which she could now no longer suppress. The unusual expression of anger with which the countenance of the Baron was enflamed, gave additional bitterness to her reflections, and seemed to justify the dread she had felt of seeing him, which she had vainly endeavoured to conquer, and persuade herself was merely occasioned by the harassed state of her spirits. Unconcious of having in any way offended Monsieur de Bertonville, she knew not how to ac-

count for his very extraordinary behaviour, and could only fear what might prove the result; but the reflection of a moment convinced her that his agitation could in no way relate to herself; and, restrained by the preſence of the strangers, she wiped the tears from her eyes and tried to assume an appearance of composure.

After some time, as if he had but that moment observed her, the Baron suddenly stopped and addressing himself to Adelaide, said in a low tone of impetuosity but little calculated to calm the perturbation of her spirits:

"I sent for you, Mademoiselle de Valmont, to attend the reading of your aunt's

aunt's will, not to amuse me with your womanish sorrow; I desire, therefore, that you will reserve it for some more suitable occasion, and answer the question I am going to ask of you. Were you informed by Madame de Bertonville of the contents of her will, and were you privy or not to any part of the transaction? I expect and insist on your immediate reply, and that without the smallest evasion."

Terrified at this extraordinary speech and the vehemence with which it was delivered, Adelaide could scarcely restrain her tears; but the strange import of his question inspired her for the moment with a degree of resolution, and she assured him with as much firmness

as she could assume, that so far from having been informed of any thing relative to the contents of her will, Madame de Bertonville had never entered upon the subject to her. The air of dignified tranquillity with which Adelaide had spoken, seemed to recall the Baron to a sense of the impropriety of his behaviour, and taking her hand, he said that he meant not to distress her, and was perfectly convinced of the truth of her asseveration. He then seated himself in a chair next to her, and addressing his discourse to one of the gentlemen, both of whom had hitherto preserved a profound silence, requested that he would proceed to open the papers he had in his possession.

Monsieur

Monsieur de la Fontaine, the attorney who had been employed by Madame de Bertonville in the transaction of her last will, and in whose custody it had till then remained, (as had also the former one, until it was destroyed,) having broke open the seals, proceeded to read it aloud; while Adelaide, whose agitation seemed now to have increased from the temporary spirit she had exerted, sat bewildered in a perplexity of thought; and so much were her ideas confused, that although she heard every word which Mr. de la Fontaine read, very distinctly, it was without the power of attending sufficiently to comprehend their import. Her attention was however at length roused by the sound of her own name, which was followed by a sudden

 and

and violent exclamation of surprise from the Baron, who rising instantly from his seat, abruptly quitted the saloon. Not having attended to what had preceded the mention of her name, Mademoiselle de Valmont continued for some moments in silent astonishment, and it was not without considerable difficulty that she could sufficiently arrange her thoughts to comprehend the explanation which Monsieur de la Fontaine now endeavoured to give her of the foregoing scene. Having however regained a tolerable degree of composure, she apologised for the trouble she gave him, and requested he would once more have the goodness to repeat to her what he had before said.

The

The relation of these circumstances, all of which Adelaide now perfectly recollected, proved to her that she had not been mistaken in the conjecture of having before seen M. de la Fontaine, who in compliance with her request proceeded to relate the subsequent circumstances of his having, in pursuance of the directions of Madame de Bertonville, destroyed the will she had made shortly after her marriage with the Baron, and drawn out a second, which was signed and witnessed by M. de Chalambourg, (the other gentleman, then, and now present,) and himself; and afterwards entrusted to his particular care by Madame; ever since which it had remained in his possession until that morning, when he had brought it with him in compliance

compliance with a message he had received from the Baron to that purport.

On his arrival at the Château, having (from the conversation of Monsieur de Bertonville) had reason to imagine that nobleman was not acquainted with the transaction of the second will, he thought it proper to relate the circumstances to the Baron in the presence of Monsieur de Chalambourg and the domestics of the late Baronne de Bertonville, whom the Baron had caused to assemble for the purpose of hearing the will read aloud.

"The extreme perturbation," continued M. de la Fontaine, "which my recital of the business occasioned in the Baron,

Baron, would alone have been sufficient to convince me of his entire ignorance of the transaction, had he not himself done me the honour to assure me of it; and I doubt not, Mademoiselle, but that you will make all due allowance for the state of the Baron's feelings, who, after having for many years considered himself as the heir to all the valuable estates and possessions of the Baronne de Bertonville, your respected aunt, at the moment in which he hoped to find these expectations fulfilled, had the mortification of learning that the will, which had been the basis of his hopes, had been destroyed, and a second of a very different import substituted in its place. Although from the known, and I flatter myself, unquestioned respectability of

M. de

M. de Chalambourg (the gentleman now present) and myself, who were the only persons acquainted with the affair, there could certainly be no manner of doubt or suspicion entertained, as to the validity of the business; yet in the first moments of surprise and astonishment, we had some difficulty to make Monsieur de Bertonville comprehend, or indeed pay any attention to our explanation; nor had he, if I may be permitted to draw an inference from the evidence of his emotion previous to quitting the saloon, thoroughly understood the extent of the disappointment that awaited him."

He next proceeded to inform Adelaide, that on the opening and perusal of

the will to which the abstracted state of her thoughts had prevented her from attending, it appeared that Madame de Bertonville had bequeathed to her the whole of her property, excepting a few legacies to her favourite attendants, a trifling token of remembrance to Monsieur de Chalambourg and himself, and a small estate of about three hundred pounds a year, which she had left to the Baron for his life, together with her house in Paris; both of which were at his desease to devolve to Adelaide, or her heirs; and if she remained single, the whole of the property of which she was to be put in possession on attaining her eighteenth year, as also that to which she would succeed on the demise of the Baron, to remain at her disposal.

The commencement of this speech did not immediately afford Adelaide the information she was most desirous of gaining, which was the cause of the Baron's extreme agitation; but the close of it soon explained the enigma, and shocked to think that she had been the occasion of so severe a disappointment to her uncle, she was for some moments incapable of a reply and irresolute how to act: but while she thus sat, the door opened and the Baron again entered the saloon. He advanced to meet Adelaide, who had risen at his approach, and taking her hand he said, he hoped she would excuse the agitation into which he had been thrown by a disappointment he was so little prepared for; but that since Madame de Bertonville

had thought fit to alter her former determination in his favour, he was glad to find she had disposed of her property so well, and concluded by wishing Adelaide all possible happiness in the enjoyment of it. An address so totally different from what she had expected, would have occasioned Adelaide much astonishment, had she not perceived by his countenance the struggle of contending passions with which the mind of the Baron was still agitated. This observation rendered her only the more desirous of alleviating his uneasiness, and in a voice which betrayed her emotion, she endeavoured to express the gratitude she felt for the goodness of her aunt; but declared that she could not feel happy in the possession of this unlooked

looked and unwished-for fortune, unless he would also consider it as his own and dispose of it accordingly, having said which, she withdrew. As she traversed the hall, she was met by all the domestics who had been present at the reading of the will, and who having quitted the saloon at the re-entrance of the Baron, had waited there to offer their congratulations on the alteration which had been made in her favour. The earnest manner in which they all assured her of their joy on the occasion quite subdued her feelings, and with tears trembling in her eyes she thanked them for their good wishes, and said she should endeavour to merit a continuance of their good opinion. She then proceeded to her chamber, where throwing herself

into a chair, she relieved her heart from the heavy weight with which it seemed oppressed, by freely indulging the tears she had so long suppressed.

During the remainder of the day, Adelaide continued in her own apartment, where she felt more at ease than elsewhere, as she could there give a free course to her grief for the loss she had sustained; she also felt a degree of repugnance to see the Baron, as she could not but consider herself the innocent cause of his disquietude, and although she had never liked him, nor had his conduct been in any degree such as to deserve her esteem; yet she pitied his distress, and experienced a mingled emotion

emotion of mortification and regret in reflecting that it originated in herself.

She passed the night in a perplexity of thoughts that totally banished sleep from her eyes, and it was not till long after the day had dawned that she could sufficiently compose her spirits to procure a little of the repose which was necessary to recruit her fatigued mind. When she awoke, the disappointment which the Baron had sustained on the preceding day was the first idea that occurred to her; and rising hastily, she dressed herself, and having on her knees offered up the thanksgiving of her spotless soul and implored a continuance of Divine Protection, she was preparing to quit her apartment in

order

order to request the Baron would not proceed in the arrangement of her affairs, (which he had mentioned his intention of doing, having been left joint executor with Monsieur de la Fontaine and Monsieur de Chalambourg,) until she should have attained her eighteenth year, which would be in a very few weeks, and when she purposed (as she would then be of age) to divide with the Baron the estates which had formerly been designed for him; when Catherine the servant, whose attachment and assiduous attention to Madame de Bertonville had prepossessed Adelaide so strongly in her favour, entered the chamber with a small box sealed in several places, which she delivered to Mademoiselle de Valmont, accompanied

by

by a note from Monsieur de la Fontaine, in which he informed her that it had been entrusted to his care by Madame de Bertonville with particular injunctions to deliver it privately after her decease to her niece. Catherine having retired, Adelaide fastened the door to prevent interruption, and proceeded after unlocking the box with a small key which was fastened to it by a ribbon, to break off the seals which she perceived to bear the arms of Madame de Bertonville. On opening the box she found it to contain all the jewels that had belonged to her aunt, and underneath a letter directed to herself in the hand writing of Madame de Bertonville. At the sight of this last proof of her affection, Adelaide burst into a flood of tears,

and

and it was some minutes before she could read the contents, which were as follows:

"My dearest niece, The injustice which I was once so unworthy as to design towards you, occasions me now to feel the deepest regret, and I shall ever be thankful that it has pleased the Almighty to spare my life sufficiently long to permit me to atone for my former mistaken partiality to an undeserving object, by altering my will in your favor. My eyes are at length opened . . . too fatally opened to the conduct of that unhappy man the Baron de Bertonville; and I have good reasons to justify me in the opinion I now entertain, that were it not through fear of my being thereby induced to change my former determi-

nation of leaving my possessions to him, his treatment of me would be quite insupportable. To you, therefore, my dearest niece, my good Adelaide, I have bequeathed nearly the whole of my property; and may the Almighty in his infinite mercy grant you a long life to enjoy it. I do not exhort you to make a good use of your riches; your principles are too firmly established to render such an injunction necessary. I must, however, conjure and desire you, by that affection of which I have received so many proofs, never to suffer yourself to be the dupe of any artifices the Baron may employ to induce you to surrender any part of the property which I have bequeathed to you, and of which you will obtain possession on attaining

taining your eighteenth year, into his hands; and although I will not restrict you from affording the Baron any occasional supplies which the goodness of your heart may dictate to you, yet I strictly enjoin you never to put your name to any papers which he may endeavour to prevail on you to sign, without previously seeing their contents.—I wish most sincerely, that the above cautions may not prove necessary; but I trust, if they should, you will not forget the obedience you have hitherto always shewn to my commands. Whenever you have occasion for the counsels of a person whose more mature judgment may assist yours in any difficulties in which you may happen to be involved, I would recommend you to apply to

Mr. de Lafontaine, as one on whom you may safely rely, not only for professional abilities, but as a man of known integrity and respectability, whose conduct through life has ever been uniformly just and disinterested. Farewell, my dearest niece! and that every blessing may attend you, is the sincere wish and fervent prayer of your affectionate aunt, Marie Cecile Adelaide Louise de Bertonville."

The perusal of this letter at the critical moment when she was on the point of acting in direct opposition to its contents, appeared to Adelaide as the immediate interposition of Providence, and she raised her eyes to heaven in silent thanksgiving for having been pre-

served

served from disobedience to the will of so kind, so good a friend. The affectionate expressions of regard with which the letter was replete, and the grateful acknowledgment of her attentions, (attentions she could never again repeat, and which her aunt was now far beyond the reach of requiring,) filled her heart with a variety of afflictive and soothing emotions; the consciousness of having discharged her duty to the utmost, could not fail to inspire her with a degree of the latter, while the sad and bitter recollection of having for ever lost a benefactress for whom she began to feel the strongest attachment, renewed all the bitterness of her grief, and she wept for some moments in an agony of sorrow. At length, however, she be-

came more composed; the violence of her grief had assuaged itself, and, while the truth of her feelings appeared in the energy of her manner, she called on the shade of her deceased relative to guide her future conduct, and solemnly vowed to obey her commands. Having done this, she felt more internal satisfaction, and rising from her knees, seated herself pensively at a window of her chamber, which commanded an extensive view of the park and woods.

The grandeur and beauty of the prospect, now increased by the gay verdure of summer and the refreshing coolness of the breeze, gradually soothed and tranquillized her agitated spirits, and she sat for some time absorbed in a reve-

rie,

rie, from which she was at length recalled by the voice of some person at the door of the chamber; she now recollected having fastened it, and rising quickly, unlocked it, when Catherine entered with the breakfast equipage.

So entirely had her mind been engrossed by the sad and painful reflexions which her recent less occasioned, that she had not yet thought of taking any refreshment, although it was more than the middle of the day; nor did she now feel inclined to do so, but Catherine enforced the necessity of it with so much earnestness that she could not refuse to comply with her entreaties.

The positive injunctions which Ade-

laide had just received from the pen of Madame de Bertonville, and with which she had solemnly vowed to comply, were as directly contrary to the measures which a few minutes before the warmth and extreme generosity of her disposition had determined her to adopt, that she now felt as much averse to the idea of meeting the Baron, as she had been solicitous to see him; the intelligence, therefore, which Catherine communicated, of his having set off for Paris early in the morning, with the intention of remaining there till the following day, seemed to have removed a weight from her mind; and recollecting an observation she had frequently heard from the mouth of her dear Lady Abbess, that, even in the extremity of distress, every

every object which diverts the attention softens the evils we endure, and painful ideas insensibly vanish from the mind that is resolutely determined to endeavour to fix its attention on any other subject, she sent Catherine to the library for three or four books, from which having selected a small volume of poems which had been strongly recommended for her perusal by the Lady Abbess, she again seated herself at the window, and continued to read until Catherine re-entered the chamber, to inquire whether she chose to have her dinner served in her own antichamber or in the dining apartment: the certainty of not seeing the Baron induced her to determine on the latter, and although from the sad recollection of having so frequently

dined there in company with her aunt, (as whenever her strength would permit of the exertion, Madame de Bertonville had made it a point to attend the Baron at meal hours, and when she was too much indisposed to quit her own suite of apartments, Adelaide had always remained with her,) she felt a strong degree of reluctance to the idea of eating her solitary meal where every object must necessarily recall to her imagination those hours which were fled for ever, and the image of that kind friend from whom she was now eternally separated; yet, as she considered that on the return of Mr. de Bertonville he would probably expect and require her attendance, she thought the effort would be less painful during his absence; and

summoning

summoning the resolution which the occasion required, she descended the staircase, and once more re-entered the dining room.

As she slowly traversed the apartment to the dinner table which was placed at the farthest extremity she cast an anxious glance around in search of the large arm chair in which Madame usually sat, and which she had felt a dread of beholding now vacant, but Catherine had taken the precaution of removing it; and while she felt grateful for the attention, still, from an excessive refinement of sensibility (which the Lady Abbess, from foreseeing how greatly it would in all probability heighten and aggravate the sufferings she might have

to undergo, had in vain endeavoured to conquer), she experienced a degree of regret at its removal, and almost wished it had been suffered to remain.

The expression of unaffected sorrow which sat on the features of the domestics who attended her at table, more particularly of old François, who had lived with Madame de Bertonville ever since her marriage with Mr. de St. Pierre, and had grown greyheaded in her service, gave additionnal poignancy to her reflexions, and totally deprived her of all inclination to partake of the repast which was set before her. On the countenance of old François, the grief he felt for the loss of his mistress was marked in very legible character; this good old

servant

servant had always been accustomed, during his attendance at dinner and supper, to stand at the back of Madame de Bertonville's chair; and he now took his post behind that of Adelaide. The recollection of the worthy benefactress he had lost, (for Madame had always shewn him particular kindness on account of his long and faithful service,) seemed to recur to his mind with increased affliction; and although from the apprehension of renewing her distress, he endeavoured to escape the notice of Mademoiselle de Valmont, yet, as he turned half round to give her a plate, she saw him softly steal his left hand across his eyes, to wipe away the tears which began to trickle down

his

his furrowed cheeks, and the observation made her his friend for ever!

After having continued a short time at table, during which she helped herself to several dishes, but sent her plate away without scarcely having tasted of any, she at length dismissed the servants, and throwing on a large black veil, she quitted the dining apartment, with the intention of indulging herself with a solitary stroll through the park.

To a mind of delicate sensibility when labouring under the pressure of extreme affliction, the presence of a second person, unless it is of one who from suffering an equal degree of grief can sympathize,

and

and enter into all its sad and mournful feelings, must ever be intrusive; this Adelaide felt; and declining, therefore, the proffered attendance of Catherine, she traversed the lawn accompanied only by a small spaniel which had been a favourite with Madame de Bertonville, and to which, in consequence, Adelaide now felt much attached; and entering the path that led toward the woods, she was soon enveloped in the shade of their lofty trees.

CHAP. II.

And many a softened image of the past
Pleas'd I combine, and bid remembrance keep
To soothe me with fair views and fancies rude,
When I pursue my path in solitude.

For a considerable time, Adelaide continued to ramble through the various windings of the woods by which the Château was nearly encompassed, absorbed in thought, and forgetful of the distance to which the wide extent of the woods might conduct her, till a sense of fatigue

fatigue (from having, during her long attendance on Madame de Bertonville, been unused to exercise) at length induced her to think of returning towards the Château and calling the little Fidel, who had run frisking on before her, she turned into a path, which, from the direction it seemed to take, she imagined would conduct her to the house by a shorter way than that through which she had already passed.

She had not, however, proceeded far, until she perceived that she had been mistaken in this conjecture ; and that the track she had chosen had, from the winding of its course, led her still farther from that which she wished to take ; but, after a few minutes, she at length reached

reached an opening in the woods, from whence the paths branched in several directions; and, uncertain which to choose, she paused to deliberate. Finding her strength, however, too much exhausted to suffer her to proceed on an uncertainty without having previously rested, she seated herself beneath the spreading foliage of the trees, which afforded her shelter from the rays of the sun; and while she here remained, and anxiously surveyed the different paths, some of which, winding into obscurity, seemed to invite curiosity to explore the scenes beyond, she at length, through a small opening between the branches, descried the north wing of the Château. This discovery, as it decided which of the tracks was the most likely to lead

toward

toward the house, quieted the degree of uneasiness which the idea of not being able to retrace her way, had awakened; and, no longer under this apprehension, she felt less anxious to return to the Château.

To her harassed spirits the surrounding scenery was refreshing; and the soft silence of nature, (for no sounds were heard except such as seemed to characterize solitude, and impress its power more deeply on the heart,) the murmur of distant waters, and the deep sighings of the wind as it passed among the trees, insensibly soothed her agitated mind, and softened the acuteness of her grief into a gentle and not unpleasing melancholy.

She

She now, for the first time since the death of Madame de Bertonville, began to reflect on her own situation, and consider what plan, for the future, would be most eligible for her to adopt; considerations which, in the first moments of affliction, while affection and grief for her aunt wholly occupied her heart, had not once occurred to her. The injunctions she had received from Madame de Bertonville, and with which she had promised to comply, relative to the Baron, she had not, at the time, perfectly understood; nor had she then the power to demand an explanation; but, as she now recalled to her recollection the terms in which they were expressed, they occasioned a degree of uncertainty as to their import highly

distressing

distressing to her feelings. There appeared to her a propriety in withdrawing from a home no longer sanctioned by the presence of a female relative, which delicacy seemed to demand, and which she could not resolve to relinquish, notwithstanding the desire expressed by Madame de Bertonville, that, after her decease, Adelaide should not "desert" the Baron, and which, for some moments, she feared to imply a contrary wish; till, on more deliberate reflection, she at length remembered that Madame de Bertonville had also said, that the house of the Baron would "no longer be a proper abode" for her; and while she wondered that this recollection had not sooner occurred to her, she now derived extreme satisfaction

faction from the certainty it afforded, that the duty she owed her aunt would not be opposed by the conduct which she considered a duty due to herself.

Having no longer, therefore, any hesitation on this subject, and that her residence under the same roof with Mr. de Bertonville would now be rendered more than ever irksome to both, from the circumstance of her inheriting the possessions which he had so long been accustomed to consider as his own, particularly restricted as Adelaide was from following the generous impulse of her feelings, she resolved to retire to the convent she had so lately quitted, and which, she considered, would be a sanctuary not only suitable to her pre-

sent

sent circumstances, but especially adapted to the state of her spirits; and as no situation could be more eligible, nor the protection of any other person so desirable, as that of the Lady Abbess, whose gentle counsels had formed her infant mind, and to whose goodness she considered herself already so deeply indebted, so she believed that she should sooner acquire resignation and regain tranquillity, within the walls of the Ursuline Convent, than in a place less consecrated to religion.

The idea of revisiting those scenes where she had spent so many happy days in the "early morn of life," and of again beholding the companions of her youthful sports, filled her heart with

with a thousand pleasing emotions; and, while a tear fell to the memory of her aunt, she could not resist yielding, in some degree, to the tender satisfaction which the thought of this inspired.

Thus, wrapt in meditation, she continued to sit, forgetful of the distance to which she had strayed, and of the lateness of the hour, till the little dog, who, sheltered from the chill vapours of evening beneath the folds of his mistress's robe, had lain quietly sleeping at her feet, suddenly started up, and began to bark with so much violence, running a few paces forward, and then back to his mistress, as if to warn and guard her from some hidden danger, that although Adelaide caressed, and

strove

strove to quiet him, her efforts to that purpose were wholly unsuccessful.

The evening twilight had long since added its gloom to that of the woods, whose deepening shades diffused a solemnity, that, as she now looked around, awakened similar feelings, and seemed to vibrate to her heart; and although her natural strength of mind, which had acquired additional firmness from the wise precepts of the worthy Abbess, had always, hitherto, preserved her from yielding to imaginary terrors, yet, the loneliness and stillness of the hour now excited a sensation of apprehension, such as she had never before experienced, and was wholly unable to resist; and which was most

powerfully increased, when, on looking anxiously toward the side which had afforded her a distant view of the Chateau, to discover which of the paths appeared the most likely to conduct thither, but which the darkness no longer permitted her to discern, she thought she distinguished a human figure advancing beneath the dusky umbrage that closed the view. Straining her sight forward, she began, for an instant, to hope that her fears had deceived her ; till, in the next moment, she perceived the object slowly advance, suddenly pause, and then glide away behind the thick foliage that crossed the perspective. Her breath and her courage were nearly gone, yet she struggled to sustain herself; and rising from her seat, stepped softly

forward a few paces, hoping, amidst the intricacies of the woods, at least to elude the pursuit of this person, if not immediately to retrace her way to the Chateau; when a sudden rustling among the bushes near her destroyed this faint hope; and, on turning, she perceived, with a degree of terror that almost deprived her of recollection, the figure of a man emerge from behind the dark shade of trees, which, for a few moments, had shrouded him from her view.

CHAP. III.

—If I am
Traduc'd by ignorant tongues, which neither
know
My faculties nor person, yet will be
The chronicle of my doing; let me say,
'Tis but the fate of place, and the rough brake
That virtue must go through.

SHAKSPEARE.

TERRIFIED and alarmed beyond the power of immediate utterance, Adelaide sat for some moments in fearful expectation, till an exclamation of surprise that excited her alarm recalled her to

a sense

a sense of the necessity of exertion; and though almost sinking with apprehension, she yet struggled to sustain herself, and even with an appearance of composure to demand the cause of such an intrusion. The figure immediately advanced; and addressing her by her name, apologized for having thus disturbed her, when the apprehensions of Adelaide instantly yielded to astonishment, at beholding the Chevalier de Bellecourt, whose elegant appearance and engaging manners had so strongly prepossessed her in his favour, the day on which she had before seen him, shortly after her arrival at Saint Pierre; but the present unexpected meeting so powerfully recalled to her remembrance the melancholy scenes

 which

which had occurred since the former period, that her feelings, already tremulously agitated, were no longer under controul, and bursting into tears, she remained a few moments incapable of articulation. At length, however, having subdued their violence by indulging her emotions, she endeavoured to reply to the respectful address of the Chevalier; and recollecting that, circumstanced as she was, her being alone in the woods at so late an hour required some degree of explanation, she added, that having inadvertently extended her walk beyond the limits of her knowledge, and being unable to retrace the path, she had wandered about till weariness compelled her to rest; and concluded by saying, she hoped, since his arrival had

had relieved her from such a dilemma, he would not think any farther apologies necessary, but assist her to find the way back to the Chateau.

With this request, the Chevalier readily acquiesced; and offering his arm, which the fatigue Adelaide still felt rendered her willing to accept, they proceeded through several intricate windings till they at length reached an opening which afforded a perspective view of the Chateau, when Adelaide, breathless and exhausted, was once more compelled to stop; but the pause of some moments enabled her again to proceed, and being within a few yards of the Chateau, the Chevalier prevailed on her to

slacken her steps; and, as they slowly traversed a terrace which led to the building, on her expressing a wish to learn what motive had induced him to enter the woods at the critical moment when assistance was become necessary to her, he informed her, that having obtained leave of absence from his regiment, for the purpose of arranging some affairs of consequence, he had only that day returned to the house of his uncle, where, with extreme concern, he had learnt the melancholy event which had taken place at the Chateau de Saint Pierre, and, as the elder Mr. de Bellecourt was anxious to hear how Mademoiselle de Valmont and the Baron both were, he had offered to make the inquiry

quiry

quiry in person, on the supposition of being more likely to obtain a particular account than a domestic.

"Having frequently," he continued, "been accustomed, when a boy, to elude the vigilance of my preceptor, and climb over the paling which separates the grounds of the Chateau de Saint Pierre from those of my uncle, I thus became perfectly acquainted with the woods; and recollecting this evening, that the path which winds through them would conduct me in a much shorter time than the high road, I determined, as I wished not to delay, on repeating my former practice, although I was little aware of the pleasure it has afforded me."

As he concluded, they reached the Chateau; and having requested, and obtained permission from Adelaide to repeat his inquiries at a future period, the Chevalier gently pressed the hand she now withdrew from beneath his arm, and wishing her a good night, bowed and retired.

On entering the hall, Adelaide was met by Catherine; who, having expressed much joy at seeing her safely returned, as, from the length of time she had been absent, she feared some accident had befallen her, informed her that the Baron had returned, unexpectedly, almost immediately after she had quitted the Chateau; and, being uneasy at her absence, had sent three

of

of the servants to different parts of the park and woods in search of her. This intelligence was not the most welcome Adelaide could have received; as, from the dislike she had always entertained to his character, which was now more than ever confirmed by his unfeeling conduct toward Madame de Bertonville, his society was highly unpleasant to her; and, having understood his intention was to have spent several days in Paris, she felt disappointed at his sudden return. Desirous, however, of learning what occasioned it, as also to remove the fears he had expressed on her account, she repaired instantly to the saloon, where the Baron received her with an unusual degree of complaisance; and having slightly mentioned that the cause of

 his

his return was the not being able to transact business, as his attorney had been suddenly taken ill, he inquired the occasion of her walking till so late an hour; adding, that he had suffered much anxiety from the idea of her having experienced some disaster. As he had never before expressed the slightest solicitude on her account, although occasions had occurred which seemed more strongly to require it, Adelaide felt rather at a loss to account for this unusual exertion of civility and kindness; but whatever might occasion this alteration, it was such as to require her ackowledgment; and having thanked him, she related briefly the circumstances which had prolonged her stay, and her having so opportunely met the

the Chevalier de Bellecourt; "without whose assistance," she added, "I should probably have remained amongst the woods until now."

At the mention of the Chevalier, the countenance of the Baron changed, and he hastily demanded whether he had accompanied Adelaide to the Chateau, to which she replied in the affirmative; repeating, that, without his assistance, she could not have retraced her way to the Chateau; but if the unusual politeness of his manners toward her had excited her surprise, the harshness with which the Baron now reprimanded her, for the imprudence he deemed her to have been guilty of, in going out unattended, and thereby subjecting her-

self

self to the necessity of requiring the protection of a young man, astonished her much more; as the idea of impropriety being attached to circumstances so perfectly accidental would never have occured to her innocent mind; and while her cheeks glowed from various emotions, the Baron continued his lecture; the severity of which he partly palliated, by saying that, although from his long acquaintance with the uncle of the Chevalier, he admitted the latter to his house, "yet, the known profligacy of his character is such," he added, "as renders him a very improper acquaintance for you, situated as you now are; and while you continue under my protection, I consider it a duty incumbent on me to guard you from whatever is likely

to

to subject you to censure; and I must therefore desire that you do not, a second time, permit him to be the companion of your rambles"

"I thought, Sir," said Adelaide, "I had explained to you that my meeting the Chevalier was.—"

"I know," interrupted the Baron, "I know what you would say, and I am willing to believe it to be so; but however, we will talk farther on this subject at some future time, as at present I have business to transact with my steward."

Saying this, he quitted the apartment; leaving Adelaide to ruminate on a discourse, the manner and substance

of

of which were equally distressing to her feelings; as, however, Mr. de Bertonville had professed a contrary belief, he still seemed to harbour suspicions which shocked her delicacy, while they encreased the painful emotions with which she reflected on the unfavourable account of the Chevalier; in whose favour, she now perceived, she was more strongly prepossessed than she had before suffered herself to believe.

There are, indeed, few incidents which more deeply affect persons of a benevolent disposition, than the discovery, that those whom they have been accustomed to consider as amiable and deserving objects, are unworthy of the good opinion they have entertained

tained of them. A thousand undefinable emotions of tenderness and regret, and perhaps a latent spark of vanity, which is wounded by this instance of their own wans of penetration, occasion them indignantly to reject the first insinuations of the kind; but, when they can no longer fondly entertain a doubt, and that the painful conviction flashes on their minds, they lament the sad certainty with a poignancy of affliction, such as few other incidents have the power of exciting; and though the lesson is, perhaps, one of the most distressing and humiliating that can be learnt, yet it may in the end prove beneficial, by inducing them to reflect, more than they might otherwise

have

have done, how little perfection is to be found in this world.

Immured, from early childhood, in a convent, where (the holy fathers who attended in quality of confessors alone excepted) she was secluded from the sight of men, it is not surprising that Adelaide, whose soul was susceptible of all the finer emotions, had not beheld with indifference the uncommon attractions of the Chevalier de Bellecourt.

The time she had resided in Paris, previous to the illness of Madame de Bertonville, was so short, that it had afforded her but few opportunities of seeing any young men; and those, whom she had seen, were not calculated to inspire her with the tender sentiments,

ments, which the person and manners of the Chevalier had excited in the minds of many women, whose dispositions were much less susceptible than hers; and although her thoughts had lately been far otherwise employed, and that, till the accidental circumstance of meeting him in the woods, the remembrance of the Chevalier had not for many weeks presented itself to her imagination, yet the regret she experienced at the unfavorable manner in which the Baron had spoken of him, and reluctance to afford implicit credit to his assertions, discovered a truth of which she had hitherto been wholly unconscious; and forced her mentally to acknowledge, that, were he in reality as unworthy her esteem as the Baron appeared

appeared to think him, it would considerably diminish her future happiness.

Although the force of this conviction alarmed her pride, and that, for some moments, she endeavoured to believe that regard for her own dignity should teach her to subdue this infant affection, yet the more her thoughts dwelt on this subject, the less urgent did this necessity appear, until farther proof should be obtained of the justness of the Baron's censure; and without which she felt that the effort would be painful and difficult, if not indeed unsuccessful; and as the displeasure which the Baron had expressed at her accidental interview with the Chevalier had at the time and on more deliberate consider-

ation

ation, still appeared so extraordinary to Adelaide that she could not think it justified by the occasion; she willingly therefore admitted the idea of this severity being the effect of the disappointment he had so recently sustained, and which she justly imagined still to prey upon his haughty and disordered spirit.

CHAP. IV.

In such a world, so thorny, and where none
Find happiness unblighted ; or if found,
Without some thist'ly sorrow at its side ;
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguished than ourselves ; that thus
We may with patience bear our mod'rate ills,
And sympathize with others suff'ring more.

COWPER.

UNABLE to partake of the supper which was set before her, Adelaide soon withdrew to her appartment ; but although fatigued by her walk, her spirits were

were too much agitated to permit her as yet to seek repose; and placing her candle in an adjoining closet, that its light might not eclipse that afforded by a rising moon, whose faint rays seemed more congenial to her mind, she seated herself at a window which commanded a view of the park and woods.

The silence and deep repose of nature promoted the tender melancholy that prevailed in her heart; and, as she wept in calm and gentle sorrow, and, with mournful enthusiasm contemplated the scene, over which the rising planet diffused a softened lustre, her emotions were increased by the recollection of the delight with which she had first surveyed a similar prospect from a

chamber

chamber in the convent which overlooked the adjacent ground of a nobleman's estate, in the happy days of her childhood, when the wild gaiety of innocence was unchecked by disappointment, and the ardour of her imagination spread a blissful illusion on every surrounding object; and she now learnt the value of these past moments, by the contrast of her present feeling. Her experience of the world had indeed been short; though sufficient to convince her how little reliance could be placed on its delusive appearances; since, even that person, whose manners she had thought so unaffectedly pleasing, was not the amiable character he seemed to be, if what the Baron had said was true; yet never had she felt so strongly inclined to doubt

his

his veracity as in the present case; and for a few moments she yielded her willing mind to the supposition of his having at least been mis-informed on the subject; till on more deliberate reflection, the improbability of his being so, from his long and intimate acquaintance with the family, became too evident to suffer her any longer to indulge the idea.

This conviction rendered the subject too painful to be dwelt on; and she endeavoured, therefore, to banish it from her mind, and direct her thoughts to what afforded far different sensations, the hope of soon re-visiting the abode and companions of her infancy, and once more enjoying the valuable society of her beloved Lady Abbess, whose past

 affection

affection fully authorized the expectation of future kindness, and from whose sympathy Adelaide hoped also to derive much alleviation of affliction; and though among the nuns there was not one whom she loved equally with the Superior, there were yet many to whom she was attached, and to the rejoining whom she looked forward with much satisfaction.

Had the character which Mr. de Bertonville had drawn of the Chevalier borne a greater similarity to that her fancy had pourtrayed, she felt, indeed, that her anxiety to become again an inhabitant of cloistered walls might not have been so great as it now was; but now, were even Madame de Melleray (the

(the most intimate acquaintance of her deceased relative) to invite her to reside with her, (a circumstance of which Madame de Bertonville had frequently expressed a hope,) what inducements could the world offer sufficiently strong to tempt her to renounce her present plans? The desire of conforming to the wishes of her aunt would alone occasion her to waver; since Madame de Melleray was one of those common-place characters that are daily to be met with, and whose conversation neither interests the heart nor improves the understanding. Her partiality to a card-table was never opposed by any other propensity that could induce her to forego its enjoyment; and were Adelaide her guest, she could not hope to be suffered to ab-

sent herself from her assemblies; thus, daily surrounded by the restraints of ceremony, her time (of which she had been taught to make so different a use) would be spent in a round of dissipation, from whence no advantage could possibly accrue sufficient to repay her for the sacrifice. She reflected, therefore, with joy that the invitation had not been given; and with additional pleasure, from the contrast of the situations, she fondly anticipated the welcome she should receive from the dear and valued Abbess; whom, although accustomed to consider as her preceptress, she had early learnt to love; and so entirely had the gentleness of this amiable woman's behaviour conciliated the regard of her pupil, that the reverence with which she

she was taught to look up to her in this character, seemed rather to increase than diminish the warmth of her gratitude and affection.

By a natural association of ideas, the thoughts of the Convent, where they had spent so many happy hours together in the sportive years of childhood, made her now recur to the unfortunate change which a few short months had occasioned in the prospects of her friend, Mademoiselle de Saint Auzambert; and while sincerely sympathizing in her affliction, she resolved to embrace the first opportunity of discovering her abode, and endeavouring to mitigate her distress by the soothing consolations of friendship, her own si-

tuation appeared so far preferable, that she felt comparatively happy!—So powerfully does the force of contrast increase or diminish our satisfaction!

CHAP. V.

Big with the scenes now past
My heart o'erflows.

MICKLE.

IT was not until a late hour on the following morning that Adelaide arose, after a night of disturbed slumbers and uneasy dreams, occasioned by the agitation of her mind; which, notwithstanding the prospect of returning to the Ursuline Convent, whose quiet groves she had at first so reluctantly quitted, was yet far from being restored to its usual tranquillity. The unfavorable

 account

account she had received from the Baron, of the Chevalier de Bellecourt, perpetually recurred to her thoughts; and as she could not resolve to admit the belief, while her reason equally with-held her from an entire rejection of it, she anxiously revolved the means of obtaining farther information on the subject, without however being able to devise any consistent with the delicacy of her feelings. Compelled therefore to endure a suspense more painful than she was willing to allow, she sought (thought vainly), by employment, to dissipate the uneasiness it occasioned, while she awaited the return of the Baron, who had rode out at an early hour; and to whom, being now more than ever desirous of quitting Saint Pierre, she

she wished to communicate her intention of so doing. At length, from her window, she saw him arrive; when she instantly dispatched Catherine with a message to him, requesting half an hour's conversation, whenever his leisure wou'd permit her to attend him. During the absence of the servant, Adelaide revolved in her mind the manner in which she should introduce the subject of her intented removal to the Baron; for, though the probability of his opposing her intention from the habitual contradiction of his disposition, was a circumstance she did not greatly regard, since a few weeks would now render her of age, and, consequently, the arbitress of her own actions, yet she feared he might

suppose her determination rather the effect of pique at his lecture on the preceding evening, than the result of serious deliberation; and, equally unwilling to incur such a supposition, as thereby to afford Mr. de Bertonville cause for displeasure, she felt vexed at her own precipitation; these reflections came, however, too late; and the return of Catherine with an answer from the Baron, that he was then at her commands, left her no alternative but to avail herself of the opportunity she had demanded. Lightly descending the stairs therefore, a few moments conveyed her into the study; where the air of complacency with which Mr. de Bertonville received her, enabled her to disclose her plans with more firmness than

than she could have assumed had his countenance worn its usual expression of sternness. When she had finished speaking, the Baron rose from his seat and traversed the chamber in silence for some minutes; but soon re-placing himself by her side, he restored the composure of his auditor, which this pause had somewhat interrupted, by assuring her not only of his acquiescence to her removal, but also of his perfect approbation of her intention, and of the situation she had chosen. A reply so contrary to what she had reason to expect, was to Adelaide a source of nearly equal pleasure and surprise; since however desirous of her departure the Baron might in reality be, yet, as opposition to whatever plans were sug-

gested by others had hitherto seemed an invariable rule of his, on such occasions, apparently systematic conduct, she had not flattered herself with the hope of any such favorable deviation as an immediate concurrence with her wishes. Whatever had occasioned this unusual complaisance, it was however too productive of satisfaction to require investigation as to the motive; and she began to express the pleasure she really felt, when he interrupted her, by saying, that though her design of returning to the Convent was a proof of discretion, and met his entire approbation, yet he hoped she would not put it into immediate execution, as her society was a comfort, which, in the present tone of his spirits, he could not bear to be

deprived

deprived of. "I should not make this request," continued he, perceiving that Adelaide was about to reply, "could it make any essential difference to you; but, I think, if you knew how many moments of affliction it would beguile, you would not hesitate in your turn to comply."

Too just not to feel the extent of the obligation she owed for the ready compliance of the Baron, had he not by the latter part of his speech implied his consciousness of it, however contrary to her own wishes to remain longer at St. Pierre, the generous gratitude of her heart, which ever disposed her to magnify into benefits the most trifling favors conferred on her by others, would

would have prompted her to an immediate acquiescence with his desire; but his want of confidence in her sentiments, and the gross manner in which he alluded to the merit of his own behaviour, repressed the warmth of her feelings, and while she yet acceded to his request, her artless countenance plainly bespoke her reluctance.

The penetrating glance with which, as Adelaide spoke, the Baron eyed her, convinced her also that he perceived it; he, however, thanked her for her compliance; and while, not perfectly satisfied with her own behaviour, Adelaide sat a few moments silent and irresolute whether to retire or prolong the interview, the chamber door was thrown open,

open, and the names of Mr. de Bellecourt, and the Chevalier announced, and immediately followed by their appearance; rising quickly therefore, she curtsied to the gentlemen and hurried towards the door; but her retreat was obstructed by the elder, who, taking her hand, so earnestly entreated permission to lead her back to her seat, that it was impossible for her to refuse without been guilty of rudeness; and re-seating herself, she endeavoured to appear composed; but the care defeated itself, and involuntary blushes covered her face whenever the Chevalier addressed his conversation to her; struggling however with her feelings, she at length recovered herself sufficiently to reply to his discourse with her accustomed ease

and

and elegance of expression, though the remembrance of what the Baron had said, and the deep observation with which, while yet conversing with the elder Bellecourt, he occasionally surveyed her, destroyed the pleasure, which under other circumstances this interview might have afforded her; and not in reality feeling the ease she affected, after having sat a short time, she feigned an excuse, and withdrew to her apartment. Scarcely however had she entered it, before a secret regret at having done so, stole over her heart, and convinced her at least of the prudence of avoiding the conversation of the Chevalier, since his character could not justify her predilection in his favor.

Unwilling

Unwilling to trust herself at this moment with an investigation of her sentiments, she sought to lose, in the perusal of a favorite author, the remembrance of a form and countenance too indelibly impressed on her mind to suffer it to be thus easily obliterated; but the more she tried to confine her attention to the subject of the book, so much the more the attempt proved fruitless. That form and countenance, so elegant and ingenuous, presented itself perpetually to her imagination, while the sound of his voice still vibrated on her charmed sense; and, however strongly reason had before opposed the conjecture, yet, as a possibility certainly existed in its favor, the idea of Mr. de Bertonville's having been mis-informed respecting the

character

character of the Chevalier, again oc-curred, and was no longer disregarded.

Her reverie was at length interrupted by the distant closing of doors, and sound of the study bell; when invo-luntarily darting from her seat to the window, she again beheld the object of her contemplations, who, with his uncle, traversed the road leading to the park gates; and having placed herself in a position that prevented her from being seen by them, she continued to watch their steps till the intervening trees hid them from her sight. On turning to quit the window, she started at perceiving Catherine by her side, while her cheeks glowed at the consciousness of having been so absorbed as not to have noticed

her

her entrance into the chamber, and the apprehension of having thus betrayed the feelings she wished most to conceal.

Whether her fears on this subject were well founded, the short, fat face of her attendant did not enable her to determine; but having, as well as her young lady, had a view of the departed guests, she seemed to forget the occasion of her intrusion, in her eargerness to speak of them; nor could the confused Adelaide otherwise account for the joy she expressed at the unexpected return of the Chevalier than by the supposition of her having developed the emotions she sought to disguise; till her frequent mention and encomiums of his valet, "Monsieur François,"

afforded

afforded her a more welcome explanation. Relieved from the former unpleasant conjecture, she now suffered her uninterruptedly to continue her harangue; nor was her patience unrewarded; since, at the termination of Catherine's prolix discourse, Adelaide had the satisfaction of learning that the Chevalier was not only the idol of his uncle, but of all the household; a circumstance which did not require the embellishments of rhetoric to induce her to believe, and which still contributed to strengthen the favorable opinion her sanguine imagination had (notwithstanding the contrary assertions of the Baron) already adopted; as she justly considered, that there is scarcely any more certain criterion of a character,

than

than the manner in which it exerts that degree of authority over others with which fate has invested it.

The hour of dinner at length broke the chain of her reflections; and when at the conclusion of the repast Adelaide rose to withdraw, but returned again to her seat at the request of the Baron, dreading lest her behaviour in the morning should have been contrary to his notions of decorum, and occasion a second lecture, she felt equally surprised and mortified, on learning that it was her company in an excursion to his paternal seat, which business required the Baron to make, that he wished to obtain. However averse to comply with this demand, yet it would have ap-

peared

peared so extraordinary had she objected to remove from her present abode, having already consented to postpone her return to the Convent, that she perceived the necessity of concealing her sentiments under the veil of immediate acquiescence; and while she dared not encounter the glance of his penetrating eye, lest the Baron should read in hers what passed in her mind, she promised to be ready to accompany him at an early hour the following morning.

The intelligence of the projected journey, which on returning to her apartment Adelaide communicated to Catherine, seemed to afford her as little satisfaction as it had before done her young lady; and while employed in

making

making the necessary arrangements for her departure, she could not forbear expressing her repugnance; but, perceiving an expression of uneasiness in the countenance of Adelaide which she construed into displeasure at the freedom she had taken, she added, that she hoped Mademoiselle would not be angry with her; "for indeed the Chateau is such a gloomy old place," she continued, "that you will never wish to go there a second time, I am certain, Mademoiselle.—My poor dear mistress never could bear the thoughts of going there; and when the time has been near, for we always used to go down there for a few weeks at this time of the year, she has said to me more than once, poor lady; 'Catherine,' says she, 'Catherine, I

don't

don't know what ails me, but, to be sure, Catherine,' she would say, 'I never feel happy when I think of going to the Chateau; for though it's a fine place (and so, to be sure, it is for the matter of that,) yet, there's a something so melancholy about it, that it always makes me low-spirited;' and sure enough, poor dear lady! she had enough else to make her low-spirited: but, however, Mademoiselle," she continued, perceiving the tears, which at her mention of Madame de Bertonville, stole from the eyes of Adelaide, "to be sure, Mademoiselle, if any body ever was happy in the other world, my mistress is; for there never was, I do believe, a more religious, good lady; and though we grieve for her loss, as, to be sure, it's but na-

tural

tural to do, yet she had so much to vex her here, Mademoiselle, that we ought rather to be thankful she is now so much happier."

Unable to reply but with her tears to this panegyric on one whose loss she had so recently sustained, and whose every thought and action seemed now as it were sanctified by her being no longer an inhabitant of this world, Adelaide felt relieved when the absence of her maid left her more at liberty to indulge the sorrow which her intended consolation had rather increased, by renewing the remembrance of the sufferings of Madame de Bertonville; and though these recollections proved the

justness of the consolatory arguments Catherine had offered, yet her heart could not submit to the conviction, without being more sensibly affected thereby than it had before been by the mere consideration of her own personal loss.

At the hour of supper she quitted her apartment, having at length succeeded in subduing the agitation of her spirits; but her swollen eyes would soon have betrayed the manner in which she had spent the last few hours, had the Baron possessed his usual quickness of discernment; happily, however, he either did not or would not observe it; and Adelaide had the satisfaction of return-

ing

ing to her chamber with the hope of having in reality escaped that notice which would probably have subjected her sentiments to a wrong interpretation.

CHAP. V.

There is in souls a sympathy with sounds;
And, as the mind is pitch'd, the ear is pleas'd
With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave:
Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touch'd within us and the heart replies.

COWPER.

HER mind occupied by various reflections, the slumbers of Adelaide were broken and disturbed, and, tired of her pillow, she arose at the first dawn of day. Having dressed herself and offered up

up to Heaven the acceptable incense of humble piety, she opened her chamber window to enjoy the refreshing coolness of the early breeze. The sun, though emerged from the horizon, was still hid by the intervening hills; but the increasing light which spread through the atmosphere announced its gradual approach; while the calm repose of the hour was alone interrupted by the soft notes of the birds, who, as they now fluttered amongst the trees and swelled their little breasts in gentle melody, seemed to express the joy and gratitude with which the vivifying beams inspired them. As she surveyed this interesting scene, the heart of Adelaide was filled with the sacred sense of the Great Author of its beauties, and yielding to the en-

thusiasm it inspired; "Beneficent Creator," she softly ejaculated, "whose mercy, like the rays of that glorious luminary, shineth on all thy creatures, and whose power and majesty are so conspicuous in thy works! accept, O! accept the grateful adoration of thy servant, and deign to bless her ever with resignation to thy will!—Alas!" she continued after a momentary pause, "how strange, and yet how lamentably true is it, that, of all created beings, man, whom thou hast endowed with reflection, appears the least grateful for thy benefits; and while each moment of health and prosperity, nay even of existence, adds to the weight of his innumerable obligations unto Thee, far from increasing his sense of thy good-

ness

ness, too often seems but to confirm him in ingratitude and impious security!"

Thus yielding to the highest gratification of true sensibility, the acknowledgment of divine mercy, she continued at the window till the dazzling effulgence of the sun, now risen high above the hills, no longer permitted her to gaze on the varied prospect; when perceiving by her watch that it still wanted more than an hour of the time appointed for breakfast, she took her harp, which had not been uncovered since the death of Madame de Bertonville, and placing herself before it, gently struck a few chords, and unconsciously began a symphony she had frequently played to

her aunt during her illness, when Madame de Bertonville was sufficiently well to allow of it; she had not, however, proceeded through many bars until the well-known sounds recalled this circumstance to her remembrance, and the recollection naturally awakened others of so painful a nature that she was unable to conclude the piece. Unwilling, however, to yield to her emotions, she endeavoured to conquer them by changing to a more lively air; but the effort was beyond her ability; and re-placing the harp within its case, she repaired to the breakfast parlour, where the Baron soon joined her; and after a hasty meal, they entered their carriage, leaving Catherine, with the other female attendants, to follow in another, and Dubois

bois and the men servants on horseback.

After proceeding in silence for nearly a couple of miles, they at length came in view of a spacious mansion, embosomed in trees, whose venerable aspect seemed to denote the respectability of their owner. For the first time, the Baron now broke silence, and directing the observation of Adelaide toward the edifice, he informed her that it was the residence of Mr. de Bellecourt; and as with a deeper degree of attention than the remarks which the Baron proceeded to make on the structure and its situation would solely, it is probable, have excited, she continued to survey it, she perceived a person apparently reposing

beneath the shade of a clump of trees. As the carriage approached the spot where he reclined, its noise attracted his attention, and turning to behold it, the Chevalier (for it was himself) rose lightly from the ground, and gracefully saluting the travellers, walked leisurely toward that side of the park, to which, concluding they were only taking a morning drive, he imagined the carriage would proceed; finding, however, that the sounds gradually decreased, he again turned, when perceiving that the carriage still continued in the high road and was followed by another with luggage, he remained fixed to the spot, equally astonished and chagrined, and with his eyes continued to follow the motion of the first chaise, until the

winding

winding of the road deprived him of this mournful satisfaction. Meanwhile the travellers, whose conversation had been interrupted by this incident, pursued their route in a silence, which, occupied by different contemplations, neither seemed desirous of breaking; and Adelaide, by averting her face, hoped to conceal from the observation of Mr. de Bertonville the deep suffusion with which this unexpected sight of the Chevalier had mantled her cheeks.

Although previous to meeting Adelaide at the Chateau de Saint Pierre, the Chevalier had been informed he was to see the niece of Madame de Bertonville, yet, in mentioning her to him, the Baron had spoken of her in such slight

terms, that the Chevalier expected merely to find her as she had been described to him, "a young person, whose few pretensions to beauty were soon obliterated from the imagination by the childish simplicity of her discourse." Impressed with this idea, his surprise may easily be supposed, when on entering the saloon, as has already been mentioned, he was introduced to a lady, who though perhaps not critically beautiful, was yet (what must ever be more captivating to the eye of discernment) possessed of those soft attractive graces which obtain a more decided empire over the heart, from the little claim they appear to assert to it. Astonished and scarcely able to credit the evidence of his senses on her being named to him as Mademoiselle

selle de Valmont, whom he had been taught to suppose so totally the reverse of what he found her, it was with difficulty he could refrain from expressing his sentiments; but though his tongue was silent, the earnest manner in which he continued to gaze at her, and the profound attention he paid to every syllable she uttered, although not addressed to himself, would soon have discovered to an observer the deep though sudden impression which the manners and appearance of Adelaide had made on his heart; and which was, perhaps, so much the stronger from his having been so little prepared to expect it.

Until now he had indeed never experienced the emotions which her

beauty

beauty and fascinating graces conspired to excite; and though he had frequently felt the influence of *la belle passion*, yet, while he occasionally sighed his homage to a pair of bright eyes or a blooming complexion, still on a further acquaintance with the fair object, whose charms had thus captivated him, he had so frequently found a deficiency either of the heart or head, that the effect of their various personal attraction, had been but transient. That he had seen several young ladies whose features might bear a more accurate examination than those of Adelaide de Valmont, he did not attempt to disavow, in the secret investigation of his feelings, which he made on his return to the house of his uncle; but while he tacitly allowed their

their claims to a greater share of more mere personal beauty, he felt a peculiar delight in the recollection of the many irresistible charms of Adelaide; and each moment he indulged in these contemplations served but to rivet the chains to which he had willingly surrendered from the first moment he beheld her.

Contrary to the effect it usually produced on his mind, on similar occasions, absence seemed rather to strengthen than obliterate the impression of her perfections; and the hope of again enjoying her society was the chief motive which induced him to solicit leave of absence from his regiment, as the business he urged to obtain his request was

not

not in reality of a nature to require his presence. On his return to the house of his uncle, the intelligence he received of the death of Madame de Bertonville seemed to annihilate all his hopes; as he dared not flatter himself with the expectation of being admitted at the Chateau de Saint Pierre without his uncle, and that gentleman appeared to think it as yet too early to intrude on the sorrow of Monsieur de Bertonville and his niece.

Vexed and disappointed at this frustration of a pleasure he had so ardently anticipated, he began to regret the having obtained his request, as it might be the cause of preventing him from again obtaining leave of absence at some

more

more favorable period; and engrossed by his disappointment, he passed the first few days of his return in a pensive dejection, from which he was only at length aroused by his uncle's mention of his intention of sending to the Chateau de Saint Pierre; and though in gaining the permission of Monsieur de Bellecourt to be himself the deputed messenger, he certainly had no expectation of the pleasure which awaited him, still he could not resist the impulse he felt to undertake the office.

When therefore, in traversing the woods of the Chateau de Saint Pierre, he experienced the unlooked-for happiness of meeting Adelaide, the surprise and agitation it occasioned, prevented

him

him for some moments from discovering himself to her; and when he at length did so, and was permitted to attend her to the Chateau, these sensations still kept him silent, till, subdued by the desire of diverting her thoughts from the mournful subject of the late event, the soothing gentleness of his manner, while equally avoiding the extremes of an unseasonable attempt at consolation, or an affected levity of manner he endeavored to change the subject of their discourse, soon afforded him this satisfaction; and the justness and delicacy of sentiment which he discovered in Adelaide during the remainder of their walk would alone have been sufficient to interest him, had he not already been so strongly prepossessed

in

in her favor. To all her other charms, the grief she felt for her aunt had impressed upon her countenance "that expression sweet of melancholy, which captivates the soul;" and which was rendered still more interesting from the meek air of resignation with which it was accompanied. There was likewise a peculiar softness in the tones of her voice whenever Adelaide was affected by sadness, that seldom failed to interest her hearers; and each wòrd she now uttered thrilled to the heart of De Bellecourt.

On reaching the Chateau, whre a sense of propriety compelled him to quit her, he was only reconciled to the necessity of so doing, by the permis-

sion

sion she granted him to repeat his inquiries after her health; and on returning to the house of his uncle, to whom he had ever been accustomed to confide each thought and action of his life, it was not until he had prevailed on the old gentleman to promise to accompany him to the Chateau the following morning, that he could be persuaded to retire to his chamber. At length he withdrew, but not to rest; a thousand various thoughts crowded in quick succession on his warm and rapid imagination, and entirely precluded sleep from his pillow; and when day-light appeared, he gladly arose and waited in anxious expectation the hour appointed for his visit; from whence he at length returned the willing slave of an attachment,

ment, to which he felt the more satisfaction in yielding, from the conviction that it was not displeasing to his uncle.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. *

CHAP. VI.

Full swell the woods; their ev'ry music wakes,
Mix't in wild concert with the warbling brooks
Increas'd, the distant bleatings of the hills,
And hollow lows responsive from the vales,
Whence blending all the sweetened zephyr
springs.

THOMSON.

As Mr. de Bertonville always took the precaution of guarding against the inconvenience of bad provisions, by travelling with such a sufficient quantity of refreshments to last during the journey,

ney, the domestics alone partook of the fare to be procured at the inns where they occasionally stopped; and where the appearance of the house was not such as to induce them to enter it, Adelaide and the Baron ate their meals in the carriage, or on any pleasant spot in the open air, as the weather was still sufficiently warm to permit them to do so. This last arrangement was so much suited to her own inclination, that had Adelaide but had the society of a companion whose disposition and sentiments were equally congenial to hers, and to whom she could have expressed her admiration of the surrounding country, with that delightful freedom and unreserved communication which can alone subsist between persons of similar minds,

minds, her journey would have been productive of much gratification.

The reserved deportment of the Baron, so totally the reverse of his behaviour on the preceding day, was however so unpleasant a prognostic of what she had to expect during her abode at the Chateau de Bertonville, that, though she was not a stranger to the whimsical inconsistency of his character, it prevented her from yielding as much as she might otherwise have done to that cheerfulness which change of scene so frequently inspires; and she felt rejoiced, when toward the decline of day he pointed out to her observation the distant spires of the town of Argentan, where, he added,

it was his intention to remain for the night.

After a short time, the lights which were seen to twinkle through the dusk, announced their nearer approach; and equally tired of her companion, as fatigued by the length of the journey, Adelaide on alighting at the inn gladly withdrew to the chamber prepared for her reception; where, though the bed on which she reposed was hard and uneasy, compared with that to which since her removal from the Convent she had been accustomed, weariness rendered her insensible of the difference, and she soon sunk into profound slumbers.

At an early hour the following morning the carriages were at the door and the travellers resumed their journey; and after a few common-place observations on the weather, the Baron relapsed into silence, which Adelaide did not regret, as it left her more at liberty to indulge her own reflections.

They had not proceeded many miles until they began to ascend a very steep hill; and in order to ease the horses, as from the carriage being heavily laden, they seemed to proceed with difficulty, Adelaide proposed alighting; but as the Baron preferred his own accommodation and declined attending her, she gladly left him to the selfish enjoyment of his ease, and lightly stepping from the chaise,

chaise, pursued a narrow track which led to the summit of the hill; where seating herself beneath the spreading shelter of a chesnut tree, she awaited the gradual approach of the carriage as it slowly wound along the high road, and contemplated a prospect, the grandeur of which amply rewarded her for her humanity.

Situated on a gentle eminence appeared the town of Argentan, with its tall spires glittering in the sun-beams, as when on the preceding evening she had first descried them; while through the fertile plain by which it is surrounded the river Orne gently meandered towards the English Channel, its deep clear waters reflecting every object that adorned

its banks, luxuriant woods, tinted with the varied hues of autumn, and orchards bending beneath the weight of fruit, and interspersed with cottages, from the low chimnies of which the blue smoke slowly ascended in curling and fantastic shapes; while the more distant parts of the plain were covered with flocks, amongst which were dispersed the small thatched hovels, which the shepherds of Normandy wheel about with them to serve as a shelter from the weather and the wolves, and the different colouring occasioned by the intervention of dark or illumined clouds, added fresh beauty to the scenery.

Seldom permitted to extend her walks beyond the precincts of the Convent gardens,

gardens, Adelaide had but rarely enjoyed the contemplation of so rich and extensive a prospect; and the irresistible charm (to all young minds) of novelty, with which it was now attended, contributed also its share to the enjoyment she experienced. Accustomed equally from the native piety of her soul, as from the precepts of her valued monitress, to trace every blessing to the great First Cause, the delight with which she first looked around, gradually yielded to a softer but not less pleasing emotion; and as she inhaled the pure breeze of early day, and beheld the clear blue sky between the trembling foliage of the trees, her heart expanded with gratitude toward that beneficent Being who provides as amply for the

innocent gratifications as for the real wants and necessities of his creatures.

At length the carriages having reached the spot where she sat, she was compelled to resign her rustic seat for one near Mr. de Bertonville, and they again pursued their route, during which nothing material occurred, till after having taken their dinner in the carriage at the door of a paltry inn where they stopped to change horses, and again set forward, the postillion suddenly perceiving that one of the horses had lost a shoe, stopped the chaise to inquire his master's pleasure respecting it, and proposed leading him back to a blacksmith's which they had not long passed. To this the Baron assented, as the man declared that the

horse

horse was already so lame, he thought it would not be able to perform the stage, but not without having severely reprimanded him for his negligence in not having previously examined the horses.

At a small distance from the road where they stopped were several cottages, one of which attracted the notice of Adelaide by its particular air of neatness, and the profusion of flowers that adorned a small garden in the front; and as she surveyed it, her attention was still more powerfully excited by the extreme beauty of a child of three or four years of age, who, attracted by the carriage, ran eagerly from the house, and leaning his little arms over the low white gate, returned the gaze of Adelaide

laide with so strong an expression of astonishment and delight, that charmed with his innocent countenance, she requested the Baron to allow Dubois to bring the child to the carriage, that she might give him the remainder of some fruit of which they had partaken. To this however he refused his consent; adding that though he was not fond of being plagued with "brats," she might, if she chose it, alight from the carriage and indulge her whim. While he spoke, a decent looking middle-aged woman appeared at the door of the cottage; and having in vain endeavoured to persuade the child to go in, came forward to apologize for his rudness, and take him forcibly from the gate; when Adelaide calling the servant to open the chaise

chaise door, alighted from it, and entered the little garden to the equal amazement of both the mother and child; the maternal fondness of the former of whom was not a little gratified on being informed that the beauty of her darling had procured her such an honour. Another child, a year or two older than the first, now met them at the door of the cottage into which, in compliance with the entreaties of the mother, Adelaide entered, holding a hand of each child in hers.

The interior of this humble habitation fully corresponded with its external appearance; and the same air of neat regularity equally pervaded the simple apartment into which she was now

 ushered

ushered by the children, and where a young girl sat busily employed at her needle, though the tears that streamed down her cheeks, and which she hastily wiped away on the entrance of Adelaide, proved her thoughts were not wholly engrossed by the occupation of her fingers. As she rose hastily from her seat, and offered it with a respectful curtesy to the stranger, she seemed, by averting her face, desirous of concealing her emotions, which being instantly perceived by Adelaide, who felt regret at having intruded on her sorrow, she hoped, by still speaking to the eldest of the boys, to induce her to believe that they had escaped observation.

Since her entrance into the cottage, the youngest

and that the looks of her mother appeared to indicate her readiness to communicate the affliction with which her daughter was so heavily oppressed, she ventured to inquire the occasion of what she had witnessed, intimating at the same time with that soothing gentleness of manner and softened tone of voice so grateful to the wounded heart, the pleasure it would afford her to be serviceable to Agatha or her mother.

"Heaven bless you, Ma'amselle," said the woman, wiping her eyes with her apron, "it is a dismal tale to be sure; and yet for all that it seems to do my heart good to tell it.—Agatha, who is the only daugther it has pleased God to leave me out of seven fine girls;

Agatha,

Agatha, Ma'amselle, and a young lad who lives down in the village, took a great fancy to each other when they were both of them little bits of things, no bigger than the eldest of my little boys; it seems, Ma'amselle, but the other day that I remember seeing them playing together like little Jacques and his brother.—When all the children of the village were together of an evening, Agatha would not go out to play amongst them till Julien came to fetch her; and then, when she heard his voice calling for his little wife, she would fly like an arrow out of a bow, and away they would run, hand in hand as happy as two birds.—Well, Ma'am-selle, to tell you the matter in as few words as possible, as Julien and Agatha

grew

grew up, their love for each other seemed to grow too; and about six months ago my husband and I, finding that they would never be happy asunder, we consented to their being married; though Julien's father could not give him much till his death, and Agatha might have had a richer man for her husband; but, Ma'amselle, riches don't always make folks happy; and as we all knew Julien to be a good lad, and that they were both young enough to earn their livelihood if they chose to be industrious, we thought we had no right to make them unhappy by refusing our consent; so at last, every thing was settled: the young people were to live half a year with us, and the other half with Julien's father and mother; and by that time

we

we hoped as they were to work for themselves, that they would have earned enough to begin housekeeping. Well, to be sure, I have often said, one must not count upon any thing as certain in this world; but I little thought how soon my own words would prove true. Poor Agatha was as happy as the day was long; and we were all happy, for she's a good girl, Ma'amselle, and we loved Julien too, almost as well as our own children already; but it pleased God to disappoint our hopes; and now, Ma'amselle, we seem to feel it the more, from having expected all would have turned out so differently."

Here the woman paused for a few moments, to wipe away the tears which the remembrance and mention of her

misfortunes

misfortunes drew from her eyes; while Adelaide felt a degree of anxiety lest the carriage should be ready to proceed before she had heard the conclusion of this little narrative, in which, from the simplicity with which it was related, and the affection that seemed to unite the whole family, she already felt greatly interested.

"Well, Ma'amselle," continued Manon, which was the woman's name, having at length dried her tears, "but now comes the sad part of my tale. About a fortnight after every thing was settled, Julien's mother, who was as hard working and notable good kind of a woman as ever was born, and the mother of a large family of small children,

whose

whose support chiefply depended upon her, for their father was old and infirm; this poor woman, Ma'amselle, as I was saying, was taken very ill and forced to keep her bed for five weeks; and all that time there was nobody to look after her and her children but the neighbours. Agatha, to be sure, was as useful to her as she could be; but a young girl like her could not be expected to know a great deal about the matter you know, Ma'amselle, and at last she grew so bad, that we were obliged to have the doctor to her all the way from Vire; but instead of getting better, she only got worse; and after taking all the doctor's stuff and being ill in her bed so long, she died; and such a dismal day as there was with all the poor little children

children and their father, I shall never forget as long as I live.—Julien too, poor fellow! was like to break his heart; for he was as good a son to both father and mother as ever was. Agatha she sat and cried in one corner of the room, and Julien, poor Julien! one minute he tried to comfort her, and the next, when he thought of his mother, why he wanted to be comforted as bad as she did.—The poor little children, Ma'am-selle, to hear them too, calling for their mother, and saying the nasty man should not put her into that black box, for they had seen the coffin brought in, poor little souls! 'twould have pained your heart to have seen and heard them, Ma'amselle.—Well, when every thing was over and the bills were to be paid,

it

it came to almost twice as much money as Bertram, Julien's father, had belonging to him in the world; so, to be sure, they must be paid some how or another, and we and all the other neighbours gave as much toward it as we could afford to do, and at last it was all gathered together, and the doctor's bill and the funeral paid, and the father and children all put into decent mourning. Well, Ma'amselle, Agatha and I, and all the neighbours undertook by turns to look after the children, and so they all went on pretty well, till about three weeks ago. Bertram, poor man, he went out to work every day; but he's an old man, and could not gain much. However, he and Julien were getting as much as they could, and we hoped that it would all

all go on again as it used to do; but, about three weeks ago, the rent of Bertram's cottage became due, and the estate had lately come into the hands of a very hard master, and his steward is still worse than himself; so, when this good-for-nothing man the steward came round to collect his rents, Bertram told him his story and how all his neighbours had paid the bills for him, and begged him to give him credit till the next quarter; but, Ma'amselle, 'twas all to no purpose: Bertram owed a quarter's payment already before this one, so the half year came to a good sum; for since this last gentleman had the estate, all the rents have been raised nearly as much again, which is a hard thing to do to poor folks; but, Ma'am-

selle,

selle, we can't help ourselves.—Those who are rich have it all their own way in this world; but if they make a bad use of their power, they may be sorry for it in the next.

"Well, Ma'amselle, and so for all that, poor Bertram told him as how the money he had been saving so long to pay his rent was all gone in paying for doctor's stuff for his wife who was dead and gone too; still this hard-hearted man would not listen to reason, nor would not be satisfied without every penny of his money. Poor Bertram, who is as honest a man as any in the village, "Bertram," he said, "was an old rogue, and was sure he had money enough if he chose to pay; but though he said so, Ma'amselle,

Ma'amselle, he could not think it, and only pretended so as an excuse for his cruelty, this I am sure of. Julien, poor fellow! he sold all the new clothes he had bought for his wedding; and still it would not do; for Bertram had bought some cattle two years ago of the old Lord, who promised not to ask for the payment for them till it was quite convenient to Bertram to pay it; but now he's dead, and this new one who has got the estate, sent for the money for the cattle at the same time he sent for the rent, which at the best of times was a hard thing to do.

"So, Ma'amselle, one evening the steward came into Bertram's cottage, where he and Julien, and all the little

ones were sitting, and though they had paid him every thing but five guineas, he was so cruel, that he said if they did not pay him that by to-morrow morning, Bertram should go to prison.

"On hearing this Julien was like a mad creature, for he loved his father as much as ever a son did; and the old man took on so much at the thoughts of being sent to prison, that Julien could bear it no longer. He ran out of the cottage, not caring which way he went, so as he did not come to us; for he knew we had done all we could do for his father, and he did not wish to distress Agatha and us, by letting us know it. So on he ran till he found himself in one of the great streets in

Vire, and then he began to recollect himself, and turned back again towards home; but just as he was leaving the town he met a man in a uniform, with three or four others with him, who shewed him five guineas and asked him if he'd a mind to go serve the king. Well, to be sure, the sight of this money was like a god-send to poor Julien; he said at that moment, Ma'amselle, he fancied he saw his father dragged to prison, and the thoughts of this drove every thing else out of his head; he forgot Agatha; he forgot all but the joy he should have in saving Bertram from the prison; he took the serjeant's money and so was enlisted for a soldier.—Well, he told the serjeant his story, and begged to have leave to come home with the

money to his father that night, and promised to return to him the next morning; and as one of the men who was also enlisted knew Julien, and said he would answer for his keeping his word, the officer let him go.

"When he got home, he found poor Bertram still crying like an infant, and all the little ones crying too; for none of the neighbours had heard of it, and it so happened we none of us went near them that evening. Well then to be sure, Julien blessed his stars for what he had done, and he pulled out his money and gave it his father, and the poor old man was comforted till he found how he had got it, and then the thoughts of Julien's going for a soldier seemed

quite

quite to overset him again; but Julien said all he could to console him; though he now wanted comfort himself, for he now began to think of Agatha, and how soon he must leave her, for the serjeant had said they were to join the regiment, which was to be sent off beyond the seas in less than a month's time.

" My husband was out that night, and Agatha had just put her little brother to bed and was come down stairs again to work, when the door was opened, and in came Julien; down he sat himself by the window and never spoke a word; so it happened that I was busy at work and did not think about it, till I heard Agatha call to him to know what in the world was the

matter with him; so when I looked him in the face, Ma'amselle, he was crying like a baby; and then he told us all what had happened; for my part I never was so struck in all my life; and as for poor Agatha, I thought to be sure she'd have broke her heart!

"Julien too, I hardly know which of the two cried the most; but at last Julien said to her, 'Agatha', says he, 'Agatha, it was no want of love to you, and that you ought to be sure of; but I could not see my poor father dragged to a prison when I could prevent it; I should never have had a happy moment after; and you should not grieve so much about it, for you will make me repent having done my duty.' So, Ma'am-

selle, when Julien talked so to her, Agatha took a little comfort; but when he went away, why she took on as bad as ever again, and so she has done ever since.

"The regiment however is still at St. Malo, and the serjeant who enlisted Julien at Vire; so that finding him to be such a good kind of a lad, he gives him leave to be as much with his father and Agatha as possible.

"But the day before yesterday, Ma'amselle, Julien came and told us that the regiment is to go abroad in a fortnight's time; and he and the serjeant, and all the other men are to

march to St. Malo, to join it in three days from this. So when we heard this poor Agatha was like to die; she fell out of one fit into another, and continued to do so all the whole afternoon. We had long observed how much she was altered, Ma'amselle, that is, ever since Julien had enlisted himself for a soldier; and as she is our only daughter, my husband and I agreed that we would do all that we could to make her happy; so we gathered all the money we could together, and made up five guineas, and gave it to Julien to take to the serjeant in order to let him go; and then to be sure, poor Agatha brightened up, and so we did all but Julien; and though he thanked us, poor

fellow,

fellow, as much as if it would have got him off, still he shook his head and looked dismal.

"So when he took the money back to the serjeant, Ma'amselle, why he said that he could do no such thing, as the regiment knew how many men he had got, unless that Julien would get another lad to go in his stead; so this to be sure was all reasonable enough, and it was not every one would have done as much; for he must, as he told Julien, have a great deal more trouble with a new lad who knew nothing about the matter, than with Julien, who by this time can do his exercise very prettily.

"Well, Ma'amselle, when he came back and told us all this, we still thought it would be as we wished, and that for a half guinea or so, we might get a young lad in the neighbourhood to go in his room; and so we sent Julien to try and find one, and we made as many inquiries as we could, and at last we got a young lad of the neighbourhood to agree to go; but because he found how much we wanted him to go, why now, Ma'amselle, he says that he won't go unless we give him five guineas more for himself, and so we are all in as great trouble as ever; for where to get five guineas at this time we don't know, as what we got to pay back to the serjeant was borrowed amongst our neighbours, and what we shall do, and what will

become

become of poor Agatha, God only knows! for she has hardly ceased crying ever since, and has scarcely eaten a morsel; but has been up all the night, working as hard as her tears will let her, in order to finish a shirt she is making for Julien."

As she uttered these words, a tall young man opened the garden gate, and as he advanced hastily towards the cottage, Manon saying it was "Julien himself," went out to meet him; meanwhile Adelaide availed herself of her absence to examine the state of her purse, and had the satisfaction of finding that its contents were a guinea and a few shillings more than the sum re-

quisite to restore this little family to happiness.

Until this moment, she had never experienced such heart-felt satisfaction; and while her cheeks were suffused with the glow of benevolence and pleasure, she slipped her purse into the hand of Manon, who re-entered the cottage with Julien, and hastily bidding her farewell, quitted the humble dwelling and returned to the carriage; while the mingled emotions of gratitude and astonishment which this unlooked-for donation excited in the mind of Manon, deprived her of the power of expressing her feelings, and she could only weep her thanks.

CHAP. VIII.

Ah! little think the gay licentious proud,
Whom pleasure, pow'r, and affluence surround;
They, whom their thoughtless hours in giddy mirth,
And wanton, often cruel, riot waste;
Ah! little think they, while they dance along,
How many feel, this very moment, death,
And all the sad variety of pain.

THOMSON.

ON reaching the carriage, Adelaide found it ready to proceed, and replacing herself by the side of Mr. de Bertonville, they again sat forward; when the

the repeated bows and curtesies with which, as long as the carriage continued in sight, Julien and Manon endeavoured to testify their gratitude, having excited the notice of the Baron, Adelaide related the little narrative which had so deeply interested her, and concluded it by expressing the pleasure she had felt in the power of relieving the poor people from their distress; but far from participating her feelings, Mr. de Bertonville replied that he did not doubt but that the whole story was an artful fabrication, for the purpose which it had effected, of extorting money: "However," he added, "at your age it is not surprising that your judgment should be precipitate and your passions warm; but I hope, when you have the command

of

of your fortune, you will learn the true value of money, and. . . ."

"I trust I shall, indeed, Sir," interrupted Adelaide, "I trust I shall ever remember that the greater the power of assisting them, the stronger are the claims of the unfortunate on every feeling mind; nor can I ever estimate riches more highly than by considering them as the means of promoting the happiness of my fellow creatures!"

"Nay, young lady," replied the Baron drily, "if you chuse to shut your eyes to imposition, it is certainly no business of mine to interfere; 'tis pity however, that the age of romance and chivalry no longer exists, for with these heroic

heroic notions, and your passion for evening rambles, you would be admirably calculated for a heroine of adventure."

Too much disgusted by a sarcasm she so little merited, to attempt to confute the opinion which it proved the Baron to have adopted, Adelaide remained silent; but though she spoke not, her expressive countenance plainly bespoke the generous indignation his malevolence excited; nor did these sentiments escape the observation of Mr. de Bertonville; they seemed indeed to strike to his heart; and though, whether it was his conscience or his pride that took the alarm, the sudden gloom which overspread his features certainly did

did not evince, yet their expression became so unusually stern, that Adelaide unconsciously shrunk back as she surveyed them, and almost dreaded the consequences of the passions she had awakened. The Baron, however, spoke no more on the subject; but drawing his hat over his eyes, sat with folded arms in sullen silence; while Adelaide soon recovering from the emotions his behaviour at first excited, partly forgot her disgust in pity for the obduracy of his nature.

Until experience had now taught her the satisfaction it might procure her, by enabling her to promote the happiness of others, she had not anticipated much pleasure in the possession of the wealth

wealth to which she was so shortly to succeed; but as she now began to consider the frequent opportunities which she sighed to think would occur, of witnessing similar scenes of distress to that she had relieved, her heart expanded with gratitude, at the reflection that she should then so largely possess the power of alleviating distress, such at least as proceeded from pecuniary wants.

Thus in silence, and each engrossed by their own reflections, the Baron and Adelaide continued to travel for several hours, merely stopping occasionally as the change of horses required, for the delay which had happened in the former part of the day had already retarded them more than an hour; and as the

the gathering clouds seemed to portend a dark night, the Baron wished to conclude his journey before the evening closed in. In this wish he was, however, disappointed: the horses they had taken at the last stage were so tired and exhausted, that it seemed with the utmost difficulty they drew the carriage; and though the order to "drive faster," which with many oaths and imprecations the Baron at length broke silence to deliver, were endeavoured to be obeyed by such frequent applications of the whip as made Adelaide shudder; the poor beasts were no longer capable of increasing their speed; and she found but additional cause for dislike of her companion, in the inhumanity with which, notwithstanding her remonstrances, he

still

still ordered the postillions to exercise their whips. The termination of her journey Adelaide indeed anxiously anticipated, for the behaviour of the Baron, and her being wholly unaccustomed to travelling, rendered equally unpleasant and fatiguing; but, unwilling to yield to impatience, she sought to beguile the time by reflection; and as her imagination reverted to the cottage of Manon, complacency again resumed its seat in her mind.

So true is it that self-approbation (the most desirable of all possessions) will in every situation in life contribute, proportionably to the strength of our understandings, to elevate us above the consideration of mere external circum-

stances;

stances; and if the many who are, by the langour attendant on inaction, rendered so peculiarly susceptible of the trifling inconveniences which must necessarily occur to every person, would exert themselves to perform some beneficent action, or to the discharge of some of those soft duties of humanity, for the exercise of which even the domestic circle daily affords occasion, they would no doubt find the satisfaction resulting therefrom sufficiently great to induce them to repeat the experiment.

CHAP. IX.

Now black and deep the night begins to fall,
A shade immense. Sunk in the quenching gloom,
Magnificent and vast are heav'n and earth.
Order confounded lies, all beauty void,
Distinction lost and gay variety
One universal blot: such the fair pow'r
Of light to kindle and create the whole.

THOMSON.

NOTWITHSTANDING the wishes of Adelaide, the repeated orders of the Baron to his attendants, and the exertion of both the postillions and the horses,

horses, twilight had long since yielded to darkness without the travellers having reached the place of their destination; and while the faint glimmering of the stars, which were occasionally seen to twinkle amidst the clouds, scarcely allowed them to discern the roads through which they passed slowly and dejectedly they pursued their way.

At length from the summit of a tedious hill the Baron called to Dubois, and bade him ride forward to the Castle, that the gates of the park might be opened by the time the carriages could reach them. Revived by the intelligence of being nearly at the end of her journey, which this order afforded her, Adelaide now looked anxiously forward through

through the gloom, while Dubois, anticipating the comforts of a good supper and a good bed, with alacrity obeyed the commands of his master. His speed was not, however, productive of the desired effect; for although, on reaching the gates, he had loudly and repeatedly rang the bell, no one appeared to answer the summons; and equally surprised and dismayed, he returned to meet the carriages, as they now drove up, and to inquire his master's pleasure; adding that he believed the inhabitants were "either dead or gone," as not a ray of light was visible in any part of the Castle, nor was old Bertrand the porter within the lodge.

The Baron, who at the commencement of this speech had felt rather inclined

clined to ridicule the apprehensions of Dubois, was not, however, totally divested of the same feelings, when he had listened to its conclusion; and on the supposition that his voice would be more likely than the bell to attract the attention of any of the neighbouring peasants who might be within hearing, and from whom he could probably gain some information respecting the domestics who resided in and had the care of the Castle, he desired Dubois to halloo for assistance, which command he obeyed, but still without effect. Uncertain what to imagine and how to act in this dilemma, the Baron now lost all patience, and while he vented his wrath in invectives against the whole race of domestics, not even excepting poor Dubois,

bois, who having vainly exerted the utmost powers of his lungs, remained dejectedly seated on his horse, shivering, and his teeth chattering from cold and terror combined, Adelaide endeavoured to rally her spirits, and check the anxiety which the present circumstances were calculated to excite. At length, when the recollection of a neighbouring farm house determined the Baron to send Dubois thither, and that he had just given him directions for that purpose, lights were suddenly seen to twinkle through the dusk; and quickly reaching the park gates, they were at length unbarred and thrown open by the old porter and two or three other domestics whom the sound of Dubois' voice had assembled; when the carriages,

riages, having entered, drove up to the mansion. As the Baron alighted, the old porter presented himself, and, with many low bows and much terror in his countenance, expressed his sorrow for having been out of the way when his master arrived; but the Baron was not so easily to be appeased, and while he again vented his anger in a loud and imperious tone, and threatened to discharge the old man the following day, Adelaide (of whom the wrath of Mr. de Bertonville seemed to render him totally forgetful), glad to escape from so unpleasant a scene, followed a domestic, who preceded her with lights across the hall through a suite of apartments into an interior one, where she had not, however, remained many minutes, when

the Baron joined her, and with a parade of civility, which Adelaide knew to proceed more from pride and ostentation than motives of real politeness, apologised for his inattention, and the unpleasant reception she had experienced. Unwilling, however, to increase his ill humour, she cheerfully accepted these apologies; but pleading the fatigue she in reality felt, requested his permission to retire to her chamber, instead of waiting for the supper the Baron had ordered to be served. The housekeeper therefore being rang for, and directed by her master to attend Mademoiselle de Valmont to her apartment, Adelaide gladly withdrew, and following the woman up the staircase and through several long galleries, at length

length reached the chamber prepared for her reception, where she found Catherine already in waiting. Seldom requiring much attendance, Adelaide soon dismissed her, and retired to bed; but the uneasy restlessness which is so frequently the consequence of over fatigue, rendered her for several hours incapable of repose, and it was not until a late hour that sleep visited her heavy eye-lids.

It was not either until long after her accustomed hour that she awoke the next morning, for when she had at length sunk into forgetfulness, her sleep was heavy and unbroken; and after having breakfasted in an apartment adjoining her chamber, she employ-

ed the remaining time till the hour of dinner in viewing the different apartments, some of which contained collections of pictures, in the examination of which she found sufficient compensation for the badness of the weather, which prevented her from extending her researches beyond the house.

At dinner she was joined by the Baron, and while they continued at table, the butler, who was stationed behind his master's chair, took courage to intercede for the old porter, whom the threats of the Baron on the preceding evening had thrown into the greatest consternation and distress; for having had but few occasions of incurring the displeasure of Mr. de Bertonville, being

detached

detached from the remainder of his household, he was the only domestic whom the Baron had retained from amongst the number who served in his father's life-time; and though the harshness and severity of his deportment toward all his servants entirely eradicated any feelings of regard they might have been disposed to encourage, yet the idea of being discharged from a service in which he had grown grey-headed, was so much the more afflictive from being wholly unexpected; and the extreme distress into which it had plunged the old man, had determined the butler to endeavour to appease his master's anger, at the risk of incurring it himself.

The opportunity he had chosen was, however, favourable; and upon being reminded of his having written word to his steward, that unless he arrived about the middle of the day, they need not expect him until the following, (a circumstance which had Mr. de Bertonville recollected would have partly accounted for the non-appearance of his domestics,) and that, concluding from thence the family would not arrive so late in the evening, old Bertrand had quitted the lodge to join the other servants in the Chateau, who being assembled in a hall in the interior of the building, were too far removed to hear either the bell or the voice of Dubois, which last was at length only accidentally distinguished as one of them traversed

versed a gallery which faced the entrance of the park; upon receiving this information therefore, Adelaide had the satisfaction of hearing the Baron revoke his sentence and consent to the old servant's continuing; a circumstance which afforded real pleasure to her benevolent mind, and to effect which she had herself intended to intercede.

The evening proving fine, the Baron offered to attend Adelaide in a walk through the grounds; and though she would have preferred a solitary ramble to his society, yet her wish to avoid all occasion of offence, obliged her to accept his proffered civility.

Her compliance did not, however,

pass wholly unrewarded; for the Baron, who always seemed to arrogate a degree of merit to himself from the beauty or grandeur of his possessions, felt his vanity so highly gratified by the lively admiration Adelaide expressed, as he led her through the wild wood walks and shrubberies, that he insensibly relaxed from the usual reserve of his manners; and during the remainder of the walk, he conversed on several subjects with ease and apparently unaffected good humour.

The grounds surrounding the Chateau were indeed highly beautiful, and though the extravagance of their present possessor had not of late allowed him to add to the improvements, but on the

the contrary had frequently compelled him to despoil the distant parts of his extensive park of many a venerable tree, the woods which rose majestically behind the edifice had hitherto escaped the "cruel axe;" and their various autumnal hues, "from wan-declining green to sooty dark," now lighted up with all the purple splendor of the setting sun, added new beauty to the scenery.

Not having entirely recovered from the fatigue of the preceding day, Adelaide was, however, unable to extend her walk as far as inclination might have induced her to do; and having supped at an early hour with Mr. de

 Bertonville,

Bertonville, she withdrew for the night, pleased with what she had already seen, and with having still some new paths to explore amidst this interesting scenery.

As the affairs which had required the inspection of the Baron occupied a considerable portion of his time, Adelaide seldom saw him until the hour of dinner; and thus left to herself, her mornings were usually spent in rambles through the woods and shrubberies, or in reading beneath the shelter of a ruined building, which had originally served as a wood-ranger's lodge; but long uninhabited, and only preserved from falling to a total decay, as

its

its partly dilapidated remains, situated on the banks of a rapid stream and crowned by rising woods, formed a grand object from the distant grounds.

CHAP. X.

It is not, nor it cannot come to good:
But break my heart; for I must hold my tongue.
SHAKSPEARE.

THOUGH not accustomed to solitude, Adelaide passed the first few days of her abode at the Chateau de Bertonville without having had any cause to regret her removal thither; for the scenes by which she was surrounded had novelty to recommend them, while their beauty appeared

appeared to her in stronger colours from the gay spirits with which she surveyed them, and which health and happy innocence only know. Hitherto the Baron had been so much engaged by business, that, excepting at meals, they had seldom met; but after the first week, some circumstances occurred which occasioned a temporary delay in the arrangement of his affairs, and left him consequently more at leisure to attend to his fair guest. This did not, however, promote the comfort of Adelaide; for his presence, ever a restraint from the total dissimilarity of their characters, was now rendered doubly irksome by the alteration in his manners.

He had not indeed relapsed into the

sullen silence of the last day's journey, but his politeness appeared so much the effect of endeavour, and his countenance at particular times exhibited so peculiar an expression of severity, that although Adelaide was sufficiently aware of the inconsistencies of his character, yet, so far from the resource of any other society, she could not now observe this sudden and unaccountable change in his deportment with the same indifference, which, otherwise situated, she might perhaps have done; and, however remote the cause, she found herself too much interested in the effects it produced, to notice unmoved these strange caprices.

There were times when his looks became

came so wild and unsettled that Adelaide, had she been less acquainted with the peculiarities of his disposition, might not unfrequently have imagined his intellects deranged. The knowledge of his character, though it precluded all ideas of this nature, could not however prevent her from uneasiness when she reflected on this strange alteration; nor could she behold the dark gloom of his countenance without a sense of apprehension, though she endeavoured to reason herself into contrary sentiments.

Conscious of never having given him any offence, she knew not how to account for the agitation with which he seemed to struggle whenever his eyes met hers, otherwise than by attributing it

it to the remembrance of Madame de Bertonville (to whom she was thought to bear a strong resemblance), which her features might awaken, and to the consequent remorse which she likewise imagined he might feel at the recollection of his past ill treatment of that lady. Impressed with this belief, and in conformity to the wishes of her aunt, she resolved, however unpleasant the task, to endeavour as far as lay in her power to reconcile him to himself and encourage his returning virtue; but her efforts to that purpose were wholly unsuccessful. He seemed to penetrate her thoughts; and, as if the observation increased the poignancy of his reflections, endeavoured to shun her conversation and notice. Perceiving therefore

that her wish of diverting his attention from unpleasant and now unavailing retrospections appeared rather to offend than be pleasing to the Baron, she at length relinquished the attempt, satisfied with the certainty of having nothing to reproach herself with on his account.

The three weeks which had been named as the period of their abode at the Chateau were now more than half elapsed; and though Adelaide wished much to have written to the Lady Abbess, to propose her return to the Convent as shortly as it was convenient for her to be admitted after the above mentioned time, yet, as she was desirous of avoiding all appearance of concealment,

ment, she determined not to take any steps toward it, without previously acquainting Mr. de Bertonville; but whenever she felt inclined to mention the subject, the severity or returning wildness of his countenance made her fearful of entering upon any topic likely to irritate him; for though he had formerly not merely assented to, but even approved her projected removal, yet in the present disposition of his mind it was probable that he might now as strongly oppose it, if only to indulge the capriciousness of his humour.

Withheld by this consideration, each succeeding day still closed, without her having had resolution to speak on the subject; when one morning as she was seated

seated in her apartment with her eyes bent on the leaves of a book, while her thoughts involuntarily wandered from the subject of its contents, she was surprised by a message from the Baron requiring her immediate attendance in his study. With a sensation of dismay for which she could not account, otherwise than by imputing it to the suddenness of the summons, she threw aside her book, and followed the domestic; but, far from dispelling them, the disorder of the Baron's countenance, and the quick steps with which she found him walking to and fro in his study, seemed fully to justify her apprehensions; and unable to inquire it, silent and trembling she awaited an explanation she yet dreaded to receive.

At length, taking a letter from his pocket, "I sent for you, Adelaide," said Mr. de Bertonville, "I sent for you, to inform you of an event, which, though it will no doubt deeply afflict you, it is necessary you should know."

His countenance darkened while he spoke, and another deep pause succeeded, during which he continued to pace the room with hurried steps, as if he felt himself unequal to the task he had undertaken; while Adelaide, struck with the presentiment of some sad calamity, had no power to demand the cause of his agitation. But soon this eventful suspence was terminated; and unable to sustain the sudden shock, with a convulsive sigh she sunk to the ground.

ground, as her eyes glanced over the letter which the Baron had put into her hands, and she perceived that it announced the death of her beloved Lady Abbess.

Raising her in his arms, the repeated calls of the Baron soon assembled several of the domestics, and Adelaide was carried to her bed in a state of insensibility, in which she continued for nearly an hour, and from which she at length only recovered to a sad sense of wretchedness.

When the first violent transports of her grief were somewhat subsided, she sent Catherine to request the Baron would inform her how he had procured the

the fatal intelligence, and allow her the melancholy indulgence of reperusing the letter; in answer to which she learnt, that with a view of promoting her wishes, Mr. de Bertonville had written to the Lady Abbess, informing her of the intention of Adelaide to return thither, and desiring her to prepare apartments for her accommodation; in consequence of which, after the delay of several posts, the unwelcome tidings had at length arrived.

With those undefinable emotions of anxiety and horror with which we eagerly await the confirmation of what we most dread to learn, she took the letter from Catherine, and gazed for some moments on the hateful words,

scarcely

scarcely conscious of their sad import; and when at length her bewildered senses were sufficiently restored to permit her to comprehend the certainty of her misfortune, it was long, very long, before her tears would allow her to finish the perusal of the epistle, the contents of which were, that the Lady Abbess had expired about a week before of a contagious disorder which had prevailed for some time in the Convent, and proved fatal to several others of its inhabitants; in consequence of which all the pensioners had returned to their respective homes. It concluded by saying, that whenever it should please the Almighty to relieve them from this severe visitation, if Mademoiselle de Valmont still continued disposed to indulge the commu-

nity with her society, it would be highly agreeable to them; and it should be their study to render her situation as much so as lay in their power. A postscript likewise added, that, as many of the sisters were still labouring under the disorder, it had not as yet been decided who was to succeed the late Lady Abbess; nor had the writer (who said she had but lately professed) been informed on whom it was imagined the choice would be fixed.

The distress she had hitherto experienced appeared scarcely to deserve the name of sorrow when compared with that which now overpowered the unhappy Adelaide. In Madame de Bertonville, she had lamented a benefactress, whose

whose claims on her heart were rather those of gratitude than affection; and these claims the natural tenderness of her disposition rendered her willing and desirous to fulfil, without immediately considering the nature of the sentiments by which she was actuated; but while these ties had equally attached her to the Lady Abbess, the gentle and kind attentions, which, from the earliest period of her residence in the Convent, she had uniformly received from this respectable woman, strengthened and gradually confirmed them into the affectionate attachment of a daughter; and though the tender appellation of "my mother!" by which she was accustomed to address her, had always been pronounced by her with

peculiar delight, yet until now she was not conscious how much, how dearly she had loved her!

The remainder of this sad day Adelaide spent in her chamber; and having with difficulty prevailed on the faithful Catherine to retire, she yielded to all the violence of her grief, and felt a degree of relief from the indulgence; when, at length, tired and exhausted, she threw herself on her bed, and continued to weep till the gloom of evening had involved her chamber in darkness.

It is a happy circumstance that extreme sorrow is sometimes productive of an effect which appears inconsistent with its nature; and that in the deep

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and heavy sleep which succeeds the indulgence of tears, we frequently lose the consciousness of our misfortunes.

This salutary effect Adelaide now experienced; and though she had not taken off her clothes, yet insensibly she sunk into repose, and in the visions of the night she was once more within the peaceful walls of the Ursuline Convent, once more blessed by the indulgent smiles of her revered monitress, and surrounded by the youthful companions of her former happy days:—but daylight at length returned, and, destroying these blissful illusions, brought only the sad recollection of her sorrows!

CHAP. XI.

Of joys departed never to return,
How bitter the remembrance !

BLAIR.

THE sun arose in all his usual glory, and the face of nature appeared to rejoice in his re-animating beams, while spiritless and dejected Adelaide quitted her pillow to lament and weep anew the sad event which had not only overwhelmed her with the deepest affliction, but had likewise annihilated all her future

ture plans. She fancied that any other calamity she could have borne with a greater degree of fortitude than that which she now deplored. The loss of fortune, the certainty of the Chevalier de Bellecourt's being unworthy her regard, the whole world, had she possessed it, would not have been too great a sacrifice, could it have procured her the power of re-animating the cold and lifeless form of that beloved friend, which was now consigned to the grave, now mouldering into dust!

Finding it impossible to restrain the feelings of her full heart, she would gladly have passed the day alone; but as the Baron had expressed a wish that she should do so at the hour of dinner,

she quitted her chamber and took her accustomed seat at the table, and while the tears flowed silently down her pale cheeks, she helped herself to the different dishes, and affected to eat though unable to swallow a morsel.

Far, however, from testifying uneasiness at her dejection, or endeavouring to soothe her by attention, the Baron's looks wore even more than their usual austerity; her grief seemed to offend him and deepen the gloom of his brow; and though from the late tenor of his conduct, she had not expected to receive any alleviation of her distress from his sympathy, yet she was not prepared to meet with such an unfeeling reception; and finding it impossible to re-

press

press her emotions, she abruptly quitted the table, and retired to give vent to the feelings with which she was oppressed in the solitude of her chamber.

Toward the close of evening she fancied that the air would be of service to her, for her head felt as if it would burst; and passing softly through the house that she might escape observation, she took the path which led to the wood-ranger's lodge; where, seating herself on a rude kind of seat which had been formed of a part of the original building beneath its now ivied ruins, she felt more at liberty to indulge her grief, still too recent to be subdued, although its poignancy was allayed by the

 consideration

consideration of the many virtues of her whom she thus deplored.

At length, while her tears were meliorated by these reflections, and its indulgence gradually abated the violence of her affliction, her own situation recurred to her mind, and she perceived the necessity of forming some plan for the future, since those she had before resolved on were no longer practicable; for to return to the Convent, where every object would remind her of the beloved friend from whom she was now for ever separated, was a measure beyond the utmost efforts of her fortitude: but while her reason acknowledged the necessity of a speedy determination, the

the irresistible grief which occupied her heart, rendered her incapable of resolve. Each new plan her imagination presented, appeared so comfortless when contrasted with that scheme of happiness to which she had so ardently looked forward, but which was now irrevocably lost, that in vain she sought to reconcile herself to it by the consideration of whatever eligible circumstances had first suggested it; and she at length returned to the house equally undecided as when she had quitted it.

Thus, without having as yet finally resolved on any plan for the future, Adelaide passed three successive days, when on the morning of the fourth, she learnt with satisfaction that the Baron

purposed returning to St. Pierre early in the ensuing week. As they had frequently found it difficult to procure a sufficient relay of horses during their former journey, Mr. de Bertonville judged it advisable to send the female attendants forward the day preceding the departure of himself and Adelaide, to obviate this inconvenience. On the day appointed therefore, they accordingly sat off; but it was not until Catherine learnt that she was to await the arrival of her mistress at Argentan, (where they purposed, as before, to pass the night,) and thence proceed in the carriage with her to St. Pierre, as Mr. de Bertonville would remain a few days at Argentan, that she could be prevailed on to leave her, as she deemed

it

it highly improper that her young lady should undertake so long a journey unaccompanied by a female attendant.

Having much business to transact with his steward the evening previous to his departure, the Baron withdrew to his study immediately on rising from the dinner table. Adelaide felt a degree of satisfaction at the liberty his absence afforded her of spending the last evening in her favorite retreat; and after wandering for some time amongst the woods, she at length reached and seated herself beneath the ivied remains of the lodge, where, as she gazed upon its mouldering walls, along which the friendly plant had thickly spread its branches, as if to hide the ravages of

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"all devouring time," she reflected with a melancholy awe on the mutability of all earthly happiness.

CHAP. XII.

Domestic calamity is like the miniature of a friend, which we wear in our bosom, and keep for secret looks and solitary enjoyment.

Mirror.

The evening was dark and gloomy, and though yet early in autumn, the air had already the sharpness of a more advanced season; but Adelaide, notwithstanding, could not prevail on herself to return to the house, since in the peaceful seclusion of this favourite spot, she had

had passed the only tolerable hours of her abode at the Chateau de Bertonville; and this circumstance (from that propensity to form local attachments, which benevolent minds alone are susceptible of) increased her partiality for the place, which seemed to be now so much the more valued, from the probable conjecture of her soon quitting it for ever.

The leaves, whose varied tints had but so lately heightened the beauty of the woods, now fell thickly around; while a low murmuring wind whistled through the despoiled branches, in a mournful gradation of sound, that, to a fanciful imagination, seemed to bewail the effects it still produced. The melancholy

aspect

aspect of the place was congenial to the mind of Adelaide; and as she surveyed the scattered foliage, and reflected on the change which within a few short weeks had taken place in the now faded appearance of nature, so timely emblematic of that which the same period of time had occasioned in her prospects, as she considered that though the death of Madame de Bertonville had been to her a source of real affliction, she had then looked forward to the protection of a kind and benevolent friend whereas now she had nothing in view which could in the least cheer or alleviate her feelings; her tears flowed anew, nor did she wish to suppress them. The remembrance of times, for ever past, awakened all her tenderness

and

and grief; and, wholly absorbed, she still continued to weep, forgetful of the lateness of the hour, till long after the gloom of twilight pervaded the scene; when at length withdrawing her handkerchief from her eyes, she was astonished at the rapidity with which the darkness seemed to have increased, and which appeared the more from the heavy clouds with which the heavens were encumbered.

Although at a time when her mind was less occupied she might perhaps have felt a degree of apprehension at perceiving herself alone, and so far from the Chateau at so late an hour, yet it was now too much engrossed by real affliction to admit the intrusion of fanci-

ful

ful alarms; and as she now saw the last rays of light gleam on the dark surface of the stream, the increasing obscurity excited no other sentiments in her bosom, than those of sublime contemplation on the works of creation, and pious resignation to the will of their Great Author.

Thus sunk in pensive meditation, she would still have listened to the sighing of the breeze and hollow dashing of a distant waterfall, for these were sounds which soothed while they yet promoted melancholy, had not her attention been roused by other sounds, which she fancied to be those of human voices. With a beating heart she listened attentively, and for several moments looked

fearfully

fearfully around; but at length, neither perceiving any person, nor hearing any repetition of the sounds which had thus equally roused her curiosity and terror, she imagined her ear to have been deceived by the rustling of the wind amongst the trees, which between the different gusts died gradually away with a low murmuring noise; and the silence which still prevailed confirmed her in this belief.

Rising therefore from her seat, she turned to quit the lodge, when her steps were suddenly arrested by now distinctly hearing the sound of approaching footsteps; and as trembling she drew back, in the hope of concealing herself from the observation of these persons,

persons, since whosoever they might be, their whispers and cautious steps at so late an hour could not but give an unfavorable indication of their designs, she beheld two figures issue from the woods, within a few yards of the spot on which she stood, one of whom bent beneath the weight of a burthen he bore on his shoulders; and while in fearful expectation she continued to watch their approach, uncertain whether to remain beneath the shadow of the wall, or seek safety amongst the recesses of the woods, she perceived them suddenly stop and look around, as if to ascertain their privacy; when one of them in a whisper, whose accents seemed familiar to her ear, said to his companion: "All's safe, so you may throw it in."—" Aye,"

muttered

16 Rey.

muttered the other in a stifled voice, "but not till we've made sure of—"

At this moment Adelaide became incapable of hearing more, for with sensations of indescribable horror, she perceived, by the faint twilight which still gleamed from the west, the livid face of a corpse which these men were preparing to deposit in the river; and while every consideration of caution yielded to the stronger influence of terror, she rushed through the path which led towards the Chateau, nor stopped until she reached a hall door which opened on the lawn, and which she had only the power to push open; when exhausted through terror and fatigue, she sunk on the steps which terminated the great staircase,

case, incapable of proceeding further. Presently however the sound of foot steps and gleam of a lamp which shone from a passage that led to the offices, recalled her to a sense of her situation; and recollecting that if any of the domestics found her thus, it would require a degree of explanation she was at present equally unable and unwilling to afford, she arose, and groping her way softly along, reached her chamber without having been met by any of the family. Having secured herself from intrusion by locking the door of her apartment, she endeavoured to obtain a sufficient command over her feelings to enable her to determine on the measures best to be pursued with respect to the alarming circumstances she had witnessed.

ed. To inform the family and occasion a search for the persons she had seen, was what first occurred to her thoughts; but though urged by the most forcible and apparently the most necessary curiosity to inquire farther concerning the terrible and mysterious transaction she had witnessed, she was yet withheld from so doing by considerations of the most dreadful and powerful nature; and which, while they occurred to her mind, brought with them such emotions of horror, as almost to occasion a temporary suspension of reason. Still, however, as her understanding began to recover its clearness, a degree of hope possessed her that she had been deceived, and some circumstances she soon recollected, tended also to strengthen her in this belief.

Though

Though the Chateau de Bertonville was not within several leagues of the sea-shore, yet as the park and grounds were very extensive, a numerous band of smugglers who frequented the coast had, for some years past, been in the practice of occasionally secreting their contraband goods amidst the deep recesses of the woods, in order to elude discovery when they apprehended a pursuit. This Adelaide now remembered to have formerly heard mentioned by the Baron; with the addition of their having, at various times, attacked and severely wounded some of the Baron's tenants and the neighbouring peasants, whom having met with at different times near their several places of concealment, they suspected of having either intentionally

or accidentally discovered them, which as they concluded it would be equally productive of unpleasant effects to their community, from which ever of the above causes it proceeded, they judged equally deserving of punishment, and the outrages they had already been known to commit, and the threats with which they had intimidated all the surrounding peasantry, now recurred to her with aggravated force, and she shuddered to think of the terrible catastrophe she had witnessed.

While she thus sat absorbed in painful conjectures, her attention was roused by the striking of the great clock over the stables; and as with surprise at its lateness, she counted the ninth hour,

the deep tone of the bell seemed to strike upon her heart; and to her agitated fancy it sounded like a knell for the unfortunate victim, whose fate she deplored and whose lifeless form, as she had beheld it but a few hours before, rose so distinctly to her mind, that she almost fancied she saw it before her. The nearly total darkness in which her chamber was involved, heightened the solemnity of her feelings, and it was some moments before she recovered sufficient courage to look around her; soon, however, she checked the illusions of an alarmed imagination, and recollecting the strong coincidence of the circumstances she had heard relative to the smugglers, with the dark transaction she had witnessed, she blamed her-

self for having thus long delayed what she judged necessary to do; and rising from her seat, she crossed the chamber with hurried steps, and having opened the door, passed into the gallery which led towards the staircase; but though perfectly acquainted with that part of the house, and that at another time she would have found her way through it in the dark with nearly as much facility as in the broadest glare of day, she now felt it impossible to do so. She paused, went on, and paused again, till at length perceiving her spirits unequal to the endeavour, she returned hastily to her chamber, and ringing her bell with violence, continued for some moments to traverse the room in anxious expectation, till finding that no one

one appeared to answer the summons, she at length recollected that her bell did not sound in the lower part of the house, and concluding the domestics were still occupied in preparation for the journey, was compelled to await till they should retire to their rooms, or till she had reasoned herself into sufficient courage to venture in search of them; but for the latter purpose, she waited in vain; each moment of delay only served to increase her reluctance, and strongly as she had found reason for a contrary belief, a former dreadful surmise again presented itself, and so firmly took possession of her mind, that though the distant closing of doors convinced her the domestics were now within the sound of her chamber bell,

she no longer dared venture to alarm them.

Unable to seek repose in this state of mental agitation, she again locked the door of her chamber, and seating herself in the window seat, continued to watch the scene without, till the strengthening rays of moonlight, as the dark clouds rolled off towards the horizon, allowed a more distinct view of the apartment; when at length feeling somewhat more restored to composure, by the light which now pervaded her room, anxiety yielded to a sense of fatigue; and without taking off her clothes, she threw herself on the bed where she continued to ruminate on the late terrible occurrence, till insensibly she sank into for-

getfulness.

getfulness. It was yet scarcely more than three o'clock when, from a deep and heavy sleep, she was suddenly awakened by a noise which seemed to proceed from the anti-chamber; but she was still too drowsy to be certain whether it had in reality done so. Raising herself in the bed, while the events of the evening rushed on her imagination, she listened for some moments with intense anxiety; till finding that all was hushed in silence, she at length concluded that a dream had deceived her, and the certainty of having taken her accustomed precaution of locking the door of the outer apartment tending to confirm her in this belief, she returned her head to her pillow, and had nearly relapsed into slumbers, when a repetition of

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the sounds completely roused her and dispelled every doubt as to their reality. Starting up again in her bed, she softly drew back the curtains, and eagerly looking around her, while she scarcely ventured to draw breath, she vainly thought to discover whence the noise proceeded; but the servants who remained in the Chateau being unaccustomed to attend on Adelaide, the lamp she usually burned in her chamber had been forgotten; and all, excepting those objects on which fell the faint rays of the moon, now sinking below the woods, was veiled in impenetrable darkness.

Her mind was not, however, suffered to remain long in this state of suspence, for

for the noise again returned with increased violence, and while with trembling hands she groped for the bell which hung at the head of her bed, and which, with much dismay, she now missed, a sudden burst against the wall of her apartment deprived her of all power of exertion: almost at the same instant two figures appeared at the side of her bed, one of whom held a lamp which faintly gleamed over his frowning and furrowed countenance. Her whole frame chilled with horror, as terrible conviction now assailed her, she sank upon her pillow, incapable of articulation, and nearly deprived of sense. She had not however fainted, till finding herself lifted from the bed, and borne through a door which the tapestry

pestry hangings had concealed until now from her observation, all consciousness forsook her; and on recovering, she perceived herself placed upon a horse, behind one of the men, while the other still supported her in his arms. Struggling to release herself from his grasp, she found herself tied to her seat; and as faintly screaming, she endeavoured to obtain assistance, her mouth and her cries were stopped by the hood of a long cloak which had been wrapped around her, being drawn over the lower part of her face: equally incapable of resistance and supplication, she now found herself borne quickly through the air, and the faint glimmering of the lamp he held, soon alone served Adelaide to mark the spot

where,

where, near the park gates, the other man who had assisted in placing her on the horse still lingered.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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